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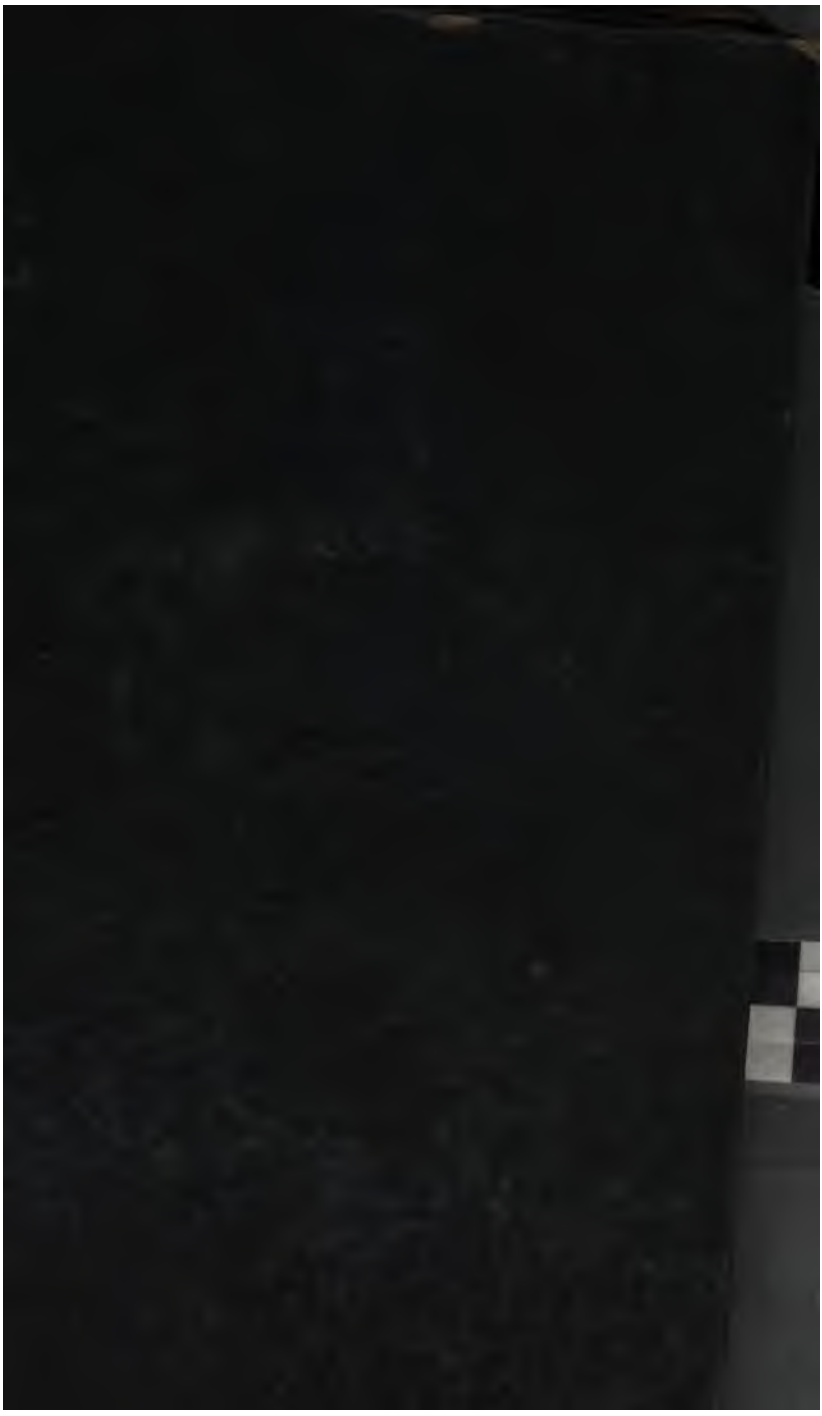

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MARTHA:

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MEMORIAL OF AN ONLY AND BELOVED

SISTER.

BY REV. ANDREW REED,

AUTHOR OF "NO FICTION; A NARRATIVE FOUNDED ON FACT."

Very pleasant hast thou been unto me!
DAVID.

And yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of thee in heaven!
MILTON.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS,
NO. 82 CLIFF-STREET,
AND SOLD BY THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

1835.

PREFACE.

When the subject of the following memoir was removed from all earthly intercourse, it became unconsciously the purpose of the writer, as soon as his mind could come to the employ, and before any of the lighter passages in the history should be lost, to bring together whatever might best illustrate her estimable character. Such a record seemed necessary to himself, since he could not allow any thing valuable to fade from his memory connected with a name so sacred to his thoughts; and it appeared desirable for his children, as he hoped it might supply them in future time with a fine example of excellence, and a strong relative motive to copy it into their lives and deportment.

If it is asked why the original purpose is now carried out into an act of *publication*, the author acknowledges that he has been influenced in coming to this decision, generally, by the opinion of those on whose opinion he can well rely; and especially by the hope that it might contribute to accomplish more extensively the earnest and latest desire of his beloved relation. Without the most distant anticipation of the measure now adopted, it was particularly her prayer *that her death might be made useful;* and in fervently seeking to give the fullest effect to her devout wishes, he knew not of any means better suited to the object than placing under the eye of others a correct delineation of her character.

Let it be understood, however, that the history is en-

tirely of a *domestic class.* The author has no splendid incidents, no improbable reverses, no extraordinary circumstances to excite curiosity and hold attention. The life he records, if interesting at all, must be so, not from its dissimilarity, but from its resemblance, to our own; the occurrences which vary it are of that simple and sober kind, that they abound in our daily enjoyments, and are familiar to our common existence. The same observation should be applied to the character he would describe. It is not intellectual so much as *moral;* and if intellectual, the mental endowments are only such as are ordinary and general, while they are successfully directed to high and extraordinary *moral* attainments.

If these explanations are given to prevent disappointment, the writer does not state them as disadvantages. They are rather, he conceives, favourable to his design. His memoir may not make so deep an impression, but it may make a *better* one. Were it his duty to record the most striking incidents, he might well fear lest, in the excitation and development of an intricate story, the lessons inseparable from it should be neglected. Were he about to fix the eye on the brilliancy of mental powers of unusual magnitude, he might suspect that his reader would be content to admire what he despaired to imitate. But as there is nothing to captivate the thoughts from the chief object, as there is nothing *extraordinary* but what is *attainable*, he would hope that the reader will readily feel, that what the deceased became he may be; and that, if he is not, it will be, not his fate, but his *fault.*

The author was convinced, that in portraying such a life it would be utterly useless merely to make a chronological record of events and actions, or even to do no more than faithfully describe the leading features of character. He has been concerned to subordinate dates and occurrences to their moral effect; to trace the influence of circumstances on the passions and the judg-

ment; to show, not only what the individual became, but to mark, step by step, the way in which she reached her spiritual elevation. And this object was not to be effected by a hasty sketch or a few powerful strokes of the pencil. Patient exertion was indispensable. There must be stroke upon stroke, line upon line, touch upon touch, to reach progressively the full expression of a character at once energetic and delicate.

In fulfilling his design, it was unavoidable that allusion should be made to living names, and especially to the members of his family. He hopes, however, that though he has not written with the eye of the public upon him, he has in no case exceeded the limits of propriety. He can sincerely say he has always made such reference with reluctance, and never except where it appeared necessary to put the subject of his memoir in interesting and useful lights. Had he taken more liberty in this way, the narrative would certainly have approached nearer to what he desired to render it. After this statement, he is ready to believe every candid mind will justify his intentions, even if it should be thought, in the fulness of the heart, more has been said than is meet.

He now commits his little work to the hands of those with whom he has found favour beyond his highest expectations; anxiously breathing at the footstool of Him who has all hearts in his disposal, the prayer of his relative—*that He would render her life and her death useful—eminently useful.* Particularly he commends it to the kindly notice of those who are of the same sex and similar age. Their character is *soon* formed: much depends on *how* it is formed. Woman, like the snow from heaven, is the fairest thing we know when fair; the foulest when debased and polluted.

MARTHA.

CHAPTER I.

INFANCY. 1793–1800.

READER,

Permit the writer to detain your attention one moment. He is unwilling that your eye should pass to the ensuing narrative with the indifference of a stranger, or the cold curiosity of a critic. He is about to introduce you, more or less, to a retired domestic circle, and especially to an acquaintance with one of its members, with whom he is disposed to think you cannot have communion without being made the wiser and the happier. In thus welcoming you as an inmate of his humble family, and placing before you whatever in the character and life of a beloved relative may contribute to gratify or to benefit, he affords a sincere pledge of his friendship; and, in return, he anxiously solicits the exercise of a kindly sympathy and reposing confidence. Perhaps you possessed a treasure as dear to you as his, and have lost it; or perhaps you still hold such a one, and tremble at the idea of its removal: in either case the sympathy he desires will already have existence. And though, by a mere possibility, neither circumstance may apply to you, the pleadings of our common humanity will be, he would think, too powerful to withhold confidence where confidence is given, or to

disrespect those sufferings which sooner or later "all flesh is heir to." In this assurance, then, he will pour his words as into the ear of a friend, expecting friendship for friendship, joy for joy, and tear for tear.

My dear sister was born on the 2d of June, 1793, and named Martha, after the late Mrs. Hamilton, of Brighton; a lady endeared to my mother by the intimacies of a lengthened friendship, and who was so happy in conciliating general opinion, that her friends were accustomed to say, by a forced application of Scripture, she was obnoxious to that wo which is expressed against those who are followed by the voice of universal approbation.

At this time I was somewhat more than five years of age; and was well prepared to receive my new relation with open arms of love. I had, about a twelvemonth previously, lost an infant brother, who had been so repeatedly talked of by my parents, in terms of tenderness and regret, that I felt as if I had lost every thing in losing him. When, therefore, "a little sister" was announced to me, I seemed restored to a world of happiness; and I was most earnest in begging to see and possess my undefined treasure.

At length I was told that my prayer was granted—that I was to see my sister; an assurance capable of producing such powerful emotions as subsided in an impression of the event which my memory still retains, and will ever retain. The very attempt to record it brings it to my mind with a vividness and a force which for many years I have not realized. I am carried back to an apartment familiar to my days of childhood. I appear to see the door open, and the nurse enter with her tender charge resting on her bosom. I follow her to her seat, and take my place at her knees, impatient to behold an object of which I had I know not what conceptions. What sensations I felt as the nurse prepared to unfold the delicate coverings in which it was wrapped! With what a full heart of satisfaction I first

looked on its half-hidden face! How I trembled as I pressed the soft and unresisting flesh of its little arm!

The earliest impressions which I remember to have received from my sister's own conduct were entirely favourable to those I had derived from her birth, and are connected with the second and third years of her life. About this time, our parents judged it necessary, for the preservation of our health, to remove us from their habitation, which was in the confined neighbourhood of Temple-bar, before the adoption of the recent improvements. We were therefore placed at Highgate, under the care of a nurse; who, like most of her class, was notable, industrious, and attentive to the outward wants and comforts of her children; but who, with intervening fits of fondness, was really sharp-tempered; and who, whether kind or severe, was never prepared to exercise, what children most need, and in the end most desire, *impartial justice*. Her treatment was never the fruit of reflection on the different characters and tempers of children; it sprang from the caprice of the moment, or from the settled preferences of a selfish attachment.

It happened, from whatever cause, that my sister succeeded in gaining the partialities of this good woman; and, of course, I lost them. I was not long in painfully ascertaining the extent of my loss. We were constantly put in opposition to each other. She was the "good girl," and I was "the troublesome, mischievous boy." I was sometimes corrected on her account, when my heart told me I was not in fault; and she was caressed unduly, that I might feel more the bitterness of neglect. I was uniformly made subservient to her; if she cried, I was forced to amuse her; if she desired my toys, I was obliged to surrender them; if any thing was to be enjoyed, she was to be first and chiefly consulted; till I was in danger of concluding, that in order to make her happy, it was necessary to render me miserable.

To those who are interested in the education of children, it will at once appear that our moral dispositions were placed, at this early period, in a perilous state of

trial. I had hitherto considered my sister as a part of my happiness, as an enlargement of myself; and my enjoyments, of whatever kind, had seldom yielded me their full amount of pleasure, unless she was made, as she could, to participate. But now, the thoughtless conduct of our nurse awakened within me passions of which I had not been conscious. I was disposed to look on my sister's gratifications with jealousy, as they usually robbed me of mine. Her interests and mine appeared, not only separate, but contrary. I felt uneasy in the society of her I loved above all human beings; and to avoid rebukes, and sacrifices, and humiliations, I was inclined, though reluctantly, to avoid her.

Happily, my sister seemed more prepared to meet this little crisis in our infantile friendship than myself. On a temper more vain, or more selfish, it might undoubtedly have produced the most baneful effects; but her affection supplied her already with a weapon to resist and subdue them. My previous fondness towards her had sunk into her susceptible heart; and as soon as she perceived that her pleasures were to be purchased at the price of my comfort, she began to hesitate in demanding them. Nothing the nurse could do to gratify her at my expense would secure her approbation, or influence her to abandon her brother in sorrow and disgrace. She would often restore the toy which, at her own hasty request, had been too rudely snatched away; she would take her little stool, and seat herself quietly by me when I was in distress, and refused to be comforted unless I was to be comforted likewise; she would gaze on my face, and, throwing her arms round my neck, would kiss away the tear which hung on my cheek; she would boldly plead my cause against her friend and my judge; and insist again and again with her sweet lisping tongue (I think I hear it now!) that I was a *good boy*. In these generous exercises, she preserved my affection and strengthened her own; and though it was very undesirable that so early our loves should be thus exposed to trial, certainly it ended in mutual advantage.

The eye of a parent is remarkably searching. There was nothing in the treatment we received which a general observer would not have approved—nothing of which our parents could decidedly complain; yet there was enough to cherish uneasiness and dissatisfaction. There was not that appearance of content, and cheerfulness, and unconstrained familiarity which they had been accustomed to see in us. The uneasiness of the child was quickly communicated to the heart of the parent. Confidence in our nurse was shaken; and we were restored to the society of our natural and best protectors.

When Martha was about five years of age, it was again found desirable to afford us the advantage of a freer and purer air. We were therefore situated with a friend at Mitcham in Surrey, with whom, excepting some intervals in the winter seasons, we continued for a considerable time. I have a distinct remembrance of the days that passed over us at this place; childhood can have few to boast of happier than they.

We were no longer in circumstances to tempt the bad passions into exercise. The hours not engaged by the duties of our separate schools, were spent together; we were nearly each other's sole companions. Martha naturally looked to me as her brother and senior. She thought herself safe in my protection, and aspired to partake of my more robust amusements. With me she spun the top, trundled the hoop, and taught the kite to fly on the wings of the wind. With me she chased the butterfly, surmounted the stile and hedge, and wandered from cornfield to cornfield, collecting gay flowers; and at last returning home, each other's king and queen, crowned with the garlands our busy fingers had weaved.

Fancy, too, had her reign; and active pursuits would be resigned for those which were more pensive. When the summer shower has been falling, we have sat gazing up into heaven till we thought we saw it sprinkled from the hands of angels, and have run out to the garden that it might fall on us. Often have we sat beneath the elm-trees, while the glorious sun was setting, imagining his

rays, broken as they were by the branches and foliage, to be a thousand separate stars, and amused ourselves in a vain attempt to number them. We have wandered far from home; and penetrating the copse-wood, and burying ourselves in the leaves, have represented the babes in the wood, till we reproached the birds for not bringing us blackberries. We have made to ourselves wings, and flown to every part of the earth with which we had any acquaintance; we travelled to the edge of the world (which we could never think of but as a plain), and have shuddered to look down into nothing. We told over again the tales of the nursery, and have invented, if possible, many things more marvellous.

What joys have been ours in the midst of these childish engagements! Free from care and from fear, we desired nothing, we regretted nothing. We were a little world to ourselves, and were happy in mutual possession. We forgot "all that was before or after," in the plenitude of enjoyment the present moment bestowed.

It may readily be supposed that this entire community of thought, occupation, and amusement was of advantage to us both. Separate from its opening to us a fund of pleasure for the passing time, it placed us in the most attractive lights to each other. It gave us each an object to love; and furnished, however unconsciously, the opportunity and means of establishing our affection.

What was the full amount of benefit arising to my sister from this intercourse must be inferred from her general history, rather than from any particular illustrations; of the benefits derived from her character and attachment to myself I think I can speak with greater precision. How high soever the gratifications we found in our innocent, healthful, and sometimes pensive amusements, I am conscious of having possessed a higher and deeper source of pleasure in my love of her. Frequently in the very hey-day of my enjoyments, I have involuntarily paused to gaze on her with a heart full of sweet sentiments. Memory still supplies me with the image of what she then was. Her lively and affectionate blue

eyes, her rosy and smiling cheeks, her open and fair countenance, her golden locks resting on her shoulders —her whole form, ornamented with the white frock and streaming broad sash, such as I have seen it tripping over the green, or reposing in the shadow of a tree, is still before me!

I can imagine, likewise, that her greater susceptibility, arising partly from her character and partly from her sex, was equally advantageous. The boy who associates only with boys, is in danger of becoming cruel and obstreperous. The mother and the sister are wisely prepared to soften and restrain the manly propensities from running into vicious excess. This influence is rather uniform than striking—rather effectual than palpable; but as my memory supplies me with an instance, which may assist me in throwing out the character I am seeking to delineate, I do not scruple to record it.

I was not long mixed with the schoolboys of a country village, before I acquired a taste for birds-nesting; a taste in the mind of an active and inquisitive boy, remarkably keen and powerful. At first, I did not think of rifling the nest; the discovery of an object so artfully concealed was abundant gratification; afterward the eggs, so beautifully coloured and marked, became an overpowering temptation; while I satisfied myself in this trespass, by vowing I would never commit the greater offence of disturbing a nest of young and helpless birds. When I had advanced so far, I was anxious to divide this pursuit, as I did every other, with my sister; but could never succeed. Her discountenance made me think, and whenever I thought about it I felt, it was a needless cruelty.

It happened, however, in one of our rambles, that my eye fell upon a nest without seeking it. There were several young ones in it. I thought of nothing but showing them to my sister. I seized the nest, scrambled down through the bushes, and held it before her. She was not pleased, as I expected; she could not help admiring them; but the tear stood in her eyes; she blamed me, and entreated me to restore them. I assured her, as

I believed, that the parent birds would never return to them, and that it would be cruel to expose them to starve. We therefore carried them home, determined to do our very best for their preservation. But the little creatures were now dependent on skilless though kind protectors. They languished and died; but her distress and her kindness, through this little event, made one of those deep impressions on my heart which contribute so largely to the formation of character; and which, could they be often traced, would be found frequently to arise from occurrences equally trivial. To her

> "Whose heart, from cruel sport estranged, would bleed
> To work the wo of any living thing,"

I probably owe it, that, at this moment, I cannot willingly set my foot upon a worm, nor rob a harmless bird of its life or of its liberty.

CHAPTER II

EDUCATION. 1793–1803.

It was the inestimable privilege of my sister to be the offspring of considerate and pious parents. If they rejoiced at her birth in receiving another pledge of the Divine mercy, they trembled also under the reflection that another immortal spirit was committed to their charge for which they were to be responsible. This conviction mixed sobriety with their gladness, and prayer with their hopes.

No sooner had the anguish of the mother, the excitement of the father, passed away, than their infant child was, with prayers and thanksgiving, dedicated to the Being who gave it. Without any unnecessary loss of time, this act of dedication was renewed and confirmed in the solemn ordinance of baptism, adoring, as they did, the Father of every good and perfect gift for an institution which recognised them in their *parental relationships;* and earnestly imploring that the appointed and visible seal of the covenant might be accompanied by its rich and invisible grace. These prayers were a thousand and a thousand times repeated in the regular exercises of the closet, the family, and the sanctuary; nor was this always found sufficient for the anxieties and tenderness of a pious parent. I can well remember, on several occasions, seeing my father walk the room with his beloved daughter lying in his arms. I have marked his lifted eye, his moving lips, and his more measured tread. Child as I was, they told me that he was in prayer. I recollect nothing at this period that gave me such an elevated idea of my father's goodness as this act, performed, as he evidently thought it was, without a witness. Thus was he com-

mending one child to the blessing of Heaven, and opening the passages to the heart of another for the blessing he had already so often solicited!

Martha's parents were honest in their prayers and unsophisticated in their religious views; to pray and to act with them, therefore, if not the same, were yet inseparable things. They believed with Bishop Sanderson (it is the creed of common sense) that prayer without exertion is presumption, and that exertion without prayer is atheism; and they resolved to adopt the best means to realize their own devout desires.

The routine of school education they were obliged to trust in other hands; but they spared neither inquiry nor expense in securing for so important a trust hands that were most worthy. It was a family maxim, often repeated that it might never be broken, that a good education was a fortune a child could never spend, and a parent could always bestow. Filial gratitude is powerfully excited in recalling the many sacrifices and determined self-denial that were necessary in doing justice to this maxim; a maxim which had descended from my maternal grandfather, the only shred by which his name now fastens to my memory. So does the very record of man hasten to decay! And so may one wise and practical saying arrest it in its course to oblivion, and render it a blessing to posterity.

By obtaining assistance for one branch of education, our parents did not consider themselves relieved from that responsibility which nature and nature's God imposed upon them. A general superintendence of our entire education, and an especial regard to our moral and religious instruction, were duties which they felt they could not, and would not if they could, have transferred to others. With hands so full as theirs, and with their children so frequently removed from their care, even these duties were very difficult of performance; but a ready mind was theirs, and it is surprising what this may accomplish. This is not the mind which refuses to do any thing because it cannot do all it desires; it is the

mind that does at once, and cheerfully, what it can; and which was honoured by the commendation of incarnate Wisdom.

To do well under many disadvantages what it is not easy to do under most favourable circumstances, is an achievement which invites inquiry, and promises to reward it. I shall therefore indulge in a few brief observations on the course pursued by our excellent parents, so far as my memory will assist to retrace it, and they shall be found relevant to the present design.

It was a rule with them to *begin early*. My sister, I am persuaded, could not recur to the time when first religion was presented to her notice. From the cradle she was taught to lift her hands in prayer, and behave with seriousness in the house of God; and from a child she was made to know the Holy Scriptures. Our parents knew how soon soever they attempted to occupy the heart with the good seed of the kingdom, they should find it pre-occupied by an enemy who scattereth tares. They revered the sacredness and mysteries of religion, but they saw nothing in these which forbade them to explain divine truth to the infant mind. They did not urge their children into those depths where the elephant may swim; they led them to those shallows where the lamb may stand and drink, and be refreshed. They rejoiced in that Goodness which had supplied a food on which, like the manna of the wilderness, the infant might thrive and the man be invigorated. They admired that Wisdom which had made truth familiar to us by narrative, by parable, and by fable; which had even imbodied and *brought it near* to us in the humanity of the Saviour; so that the understanding and the heart, in their feeblest state, might be interested. They were concerned to imitate this condescension; and no one can judge how easily they succeeded but by making the experiment.

Our parents *always dwelt on a few governing principles in our education*. It is readily admitted that they had not those comprehensive views of education which are now happily possessed by most intelligent parents of the same

class. But if their plans had less of philosophy in them, they had more of religion; if they described a smaller circle, they described it the oftener; and, after all, RELIGION AND REPETITION are the soul of education. Of religious truths they chose the simplest and most influential. It was their effort to bring their children at once into communion with their Maker. The existence, the justice, the goodness, and the presence of the Divine Being, as they bear upon our circumstances of weakness, guilt, and temptation, and as they provide for us abundant salvation, were the sentiments on which they insisted, and by which they sought to enlighten the mind, impress the conscience, and govern the conduct. They thus prepared a good foundation on which to build; and if they did not raise the superstructure so high, nor throw around it so much of ornament as might be desirable, they succeeded infinitely better than those who, with unmeasured pains and skill, trust to social claims, worldly prudence, and metaphysical theory for the formation of character. The one builds rudely perhaps—but it is upon a rock; the other builds magnificently—but it is upon sand!

They were also remarkable for *seizing all occasions to carry forward the work of education.* This arose partly from their limited opportunities,—knowing them to be few, they were eager to embrace them all; and partly from having minds always awake to the importance of religion and the welfare of their children. They did not indeed moralize, and task their children to wearisomeness, nor did they so mingle serious things with worldly intercourse as to soil their purity; but they employed the present emotion, and the passing event, to make a lasting and good impression. The conduct of others, the pains and wants of the body, the comforts and vexations of life, with endless other circumstances, were used, as they were under the attention of their children, to give and to fix the moral or pious lesson on the heart.

To parents so circumstanced, the *Sabbath* is of

unspeakable value; and in this instance the opportunities it afforded were well appreciated and employed. The whole family welcomed its arrival and regretted its departure. It was a day that yielded more of rest and of comfort, and of domestic intercourse and affection, than any other; and about our parents there was an alacrity and cheerfulness in meeting its duties which induced us to think there was a charm in them, when we were not otherwise sensible of it. My mind returns to few things in childhood with more pleasure than many of the Sabbath evenings of that period, which Martha and myself commonly spent with our father.

At these seasons we were required to repeat what we could remember of the public services; we then went through our catechetical exercises; and at the end of these we generally took our places, my sister on the lap, and myself between the knees, of our beloved parent. His countenance, naturally grave, would wear a serene smile; and he would enter into familiar conversation with us, answering our questions or proposing his own. We then chose a hymn, and he sang it with us; we thought no one could sing so sweetly. Afterward he would caress us, and smile upon us, and frequently he would close by pressing us nearer to his side, and saying, with a feeling we could not then understand, "God Almighty bless ye, my children!" By this time our mother usually joined us. We talked and sang afresh. It was an hour of gladness. Our parents embraced us, and we embraced each other. At such a moment there was but one thing that could heighten our joy: it was simply to hear our father say, "Well, my dear, I should like the children to stay up and sup with us to-night." If these words were uttered, whose parents were so good as ours! or what children so happy!

It would be needless to add, did not its pre-eminent importance require it to be placed in a prominent light, that *they were concerned to sustain all their instructions by their own example.* Children are astonishingly quick in observing how far their teachers are influenced by the lessons

they give. It is in vain that we point them to an upward, narrow, and forbidding path, if we are walking in a broad, flowery, and fascinating one; it is in vain that we enforce the necessity of humility and self-denial, if we are slaves to sense and selfishness. They will see through the hypocrisy, and are in danger, in their turn, of becoming either hypocrites or infidels.

Our parents exposed their children to no such perils. They did not attempt to worship God and Mammon. They did not mix up with the Sabbath worldly pleasures and vain conversation, and then expect their children to "remember to keep it holy." They did not treat the name and character of the minister with levity or rudeness, and then wonder that their children were not impressed by his ministrations. They did not lend their tongues to plead for a religion of humility and charity, while they cherished in their hearts envy, hatred, and pride. No; they were sincere and decided in their profession. They renounced from their hearts what it was right their children should renounce; and pursued with their might what they exhorted them to pursue. They pointed to heaven, and led the way. In their busiest pursuit of worldly things, it was apparent that they were animated by dearer hopes than earth could either inspire or gratify.

It will readily be concluded, that such prayers, such exertions, and such example could not have been without their influence; it now remains to ascertain the amount and character of this influence on the mind of my sister, while yet a child.

At this early period she was remarkable for *an enlightened state of the conscience.* She was quick to mark vice and inconsistency; and in the earlier part of her childhood, while to feel and to speak were the same thing, she would at once express herself to the offending party: so that the swearer and Sabbath-breaker have been confused by her reproof. Her conscience was active when it could not decide on the presence of evil; and in noticing those dubious actions which she had too

much light to approve, and too little to condemn, she would be constantly applying to her parents with the questions—Is that right? Is he a good man? Can he love God?

Her conscience was equally faithful with herself; she would easily detect her faults, and in most cases acknowledge them with great ingenuousness of disposition. On one occasion, the servant who was intrusted with taking her to chapel resolved to give the time to pleasure; she amused and treated Martha till she thought her more than reconciled to the act of disobedience; but the first sight of her mother revived the subdued sense of wrong, and, much to the servant's vexation, she ran to her lap, burst into tears, and told every thing that had occurred, taking to herself a full share of the offence.

What is of yet greater consequence, she was thus early in the habit of confessing her faults in private and voluntary prayer. Prayer was certainly less irksome to her than to most children, and it became indispensable to her peace when her conscience reproached her with having done wrong. In a letter which I possess, afterward written to some children, she states, that when she was "a very little girl," if she had committed any fault, she used to confess it to God, and pray that she might be made sorry for it, and do it no more.

Martha had, at this period, a vivid sense of the *Divine Omnipresence*. This impression was likely to be made by her general religious instruction; but I ascribe its clearness and power to one of those happy and beneficial Sabbath evening exercises which have been already noticed. Our father generally confined his conversations to one subject, that our attention might not be dissipated; and on this evening he chose the universal presence of Deity. He read to us the 139th Psalm. He explained and enforced it in its practical tendencies. Afterward we sung a part of it in the version of Dr. Watts. We were much interested. We proposed many curious questions on a subject so incomprehensible; but our anxious instructer gave them all a practical direction. Martha

was particularly affected; and the impression remained on her. She committed the Psalm to memory; and she was constantly making allusion to its prevailing sentiment; she would sometimes name it as a consolation to her parents; and a considerable time after she had received the impression, she employed it to reprove me. I was hastened to bed, and had forgotten to say my prayers; she told me of the omission, and admonished me by adding,—"Remember, brother, God sees you!"

I cannot but think that this sentiment, thus deeply fixed in her mind, exerted a great moral power on her conduct; that it delivered her from the meanness of hypocrisy, and many other temptations incident to childhood. I would not venture to say that, as a child, she was free from deceit, falsehood, or pilfering; but undoubtedly she was superior in these respects to most children I have known; and to what can this with such propriety be referred as to the conviction that she was not acting merely in the presence of beings on whose ignorance or credulity she could often impose, but under the eye of a Being who saw every thing, who saw it as it really was, and with whom, therefore, it was as foolish as it was wicked to attempt deception?

Nothing, however, seemed more uniformly to attract her regard than the display of the *Divine goodness*. On these her parents frequently discoursed; and on these, a temper so susceptible and generous as hers was likely to dwell with particular pleasure. This goodness, as it is familiarized to the tenderest mind in the incarnation and history of the Saviour, was most engaging. She preferred this record of Infinite compassion to all other books, and to all other parts of the Bible. She would prevail with me to read portions of it to her, and more frequently peruse them intently herself; and it was seldom done without an expression of sympathy, either by the tear that started into her eye, or the admiring exclamation, "How good he was, brother! How good he was!"

So fully, at times, did these sentiments possess her,

that she was not seldom employed in attempting to make others as happy with them as she felt herself to be. I remember to have been present when she had a little party of friends, and when she could not have been more than eight years of age. Not of my sex nor age, I was among them rather as an idle boy than as a playfellow. When they were somewhat fatigued, and my sister was at a loss to present them with fresh amusement, she sat down in the midst of them, and spontaneously began talking about the goodness of Jesus Christ; she touched on the most prominent events in his life with such simplicity and animation of countenance as interested all her visiters, and her brother likewise; and the remainder of the evening was spent in singing those hymns, and talking of those characters in Scripture History, which are usually favourites with children. I introduce this trifling incident merely to show how the subject occupied her youthful thoughts; and it may well be supposed that they would impart tenderness and elevation to a mind already so susceptible.

Let it not be concluded, that, in thus illustrating the effects of religious instruction on my sister's opening life, I am claiming for her the unquestionable evidences of genuine piety. Piety can assuredly be known to us only by settled and tried character; these cannot be the growth of childhood; favourable symptoms at this period should therefore be entertained, with gratitude and hope indeed, but still with caution. I have traced them as the legitimate fruits of an education which, whatever may have been its deficiencies, was begun, and continued, and ended in the fear of God; of an education which respected principles more than accomplishments, and a future life more than the present.

Nor must I bring the sketch to a close without observing, that this course of education brought as many benefits to the parents as to the child. Like all other children, Martha gave her parents occasional concern; but the tenor of her mind was marked by confidence, affection, and obedience. They are persuaded that,

though naturally amiable, nothing produced this equally with the religious character of their instructions. They insisted on love and obedience as *due to God*, and this included all that was due to themselves. Had they selfishly only enforced the lesser duties, they might have realized neither; but have gone down to the grave in sorrow. They honoured the God they served, and He honoured them. They have passed through many trials, but they have not had the bitterness of beholding any one of their children turning aside from a religious profession to the paths of vice and folly. And now that they are "old and gray-headed," and are "as those who watch for the coming of their Lord," I have it in charge from them to state, as their matured conviction, that if the means used for the religious benefit of our children do ultimately fail, it must generally arise either from want of skill or fidelity; for He is true who has said, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

CHAPTER III.

IMPRESSIONS. 1803–1809.

The constitution of society, like the waters of a river, is constantly varying; and all its variations are marked by the bestowment and recession of peculiar advantages. Whatever may be the improvements of the present period, certainly we have gained nothing in our domestic attachments. Relative affection is the fruit of familiar and long-continued intercourse: but now, either from custom or necessity, it too commonly happens, that the parent and the child, the brother and the sister, see little of each other during a season in which the heart is most alive to sympathy, and in which if the seeds of love are not sown, they will either not spring up at all, or afford

a late and sickly plant, neither lovely nor serviceable Hence we have so little of fraternal attachment and filial devotion; so poor a remembrance of the natal days and principal events of a family; so few of those domestic meetings which, once in the year at least, brought all the relatives together from the venerable grandsire down to the rosy babe of the third generation; and which, by anticipation or review, shed something of their gladness and exhilaration on all the intervening periods of life.

I allude to this change the more feelingly, because, at this moment, I am sensible of having suffered by it. Our parents had succeeded, against many forbidding circumstances, to keep my sister and myself mostly together during the earlier part of childhood, and had thus knit our hearts together in love; now, however, our separation, more or less for some years, was inevitable. I was, therefore, deprived of opportunity to observe the progress of her character as I was becoming more fit for the work; and must be content to reduce a considerable term in her brief life within narrow limits, when otherwise it might have furnished lengthened and profitable detail.

Prior to this date, our family had removed to Chiswell-street, Finsbury Square; and as the situation was more open, our parents determined to keep the younger children beneath their eye. Martha, therefore, enjoyed their care and society for several years without interruption, and they enjoyed in her all the satisfaction which an affectionate and improving child can bestow. At the same time, her education was committed to a lady, who, not content with imparting the ordinary instructions, watched sedulously over the religious welfare of her pupils. Under such circumstances, it is supposing the least to say, that Martha's sympathies towards the objects by which they had been awakened did not diminish. More than this I might perhaps say from my own observation, as I still had occasional opportunities of intercourse with her, and was concerned to make a serious use of them; becoming as I was, at this period,

interested in the things of an invisible world more than I had previously been.

Some of the children in the school to which Martha was now attached were in the habit of attending a catechetical exercise, conducted by Mr. John Scott, a gentleman well known as a blameless elder of the Tabernacle, and a partner in the firm of a respectable banking-house in the city, but still better known and loved as the kind and devoted friend of children. They were eager in pressing Martha to join them in their attendance on this condescending instructer; and Martha was as eager in applying to her parents for permission so to do. Always desirous of promoting by any means the spiritual benefit of their child, and having no similar exercise in the churches to which they respectively belonged, they readily met her request, and lost no time in procuring for her a necessary introduction.

My sister was now twelve years of age; and the period requires to be marked, as it is associated with some strong and abiding impressions. The lessons to which she had often attended were enforced by a new voice, clothed with happy illustrations, and commended by manners both serious and gentle; and they made a fuller and deeper entry into her mind. Nothing clave to her memory so readily as the instructions of her beloved teacher; and the animation with which she would frequently repeat his striking remarks and beautifully simple representations of Divine truth, sufficiently evinced how well she perceived and felt them. In after-life she was accustomed to refer to these as having assisted her to think rightly on many practical points in religion; and the name of Scott never passed her lips without expressions indicative of high esteem and filial love.

The possession and the bestowment of happiness in a spirit active and affectionate as Martha's, were identified; it was, therefore, an immediate inquiry, how she might make others to share in her pleasure and profit. It was not long before she found means of reply. She

had risen into the good opinion and confidence of her governess, and was sometimes employed as a sort of monitor over the younger children. These she induced to prepare their tasks once a week in less than the allotted period; and the surplus time was occupied by repeating and urging on their attention as much of Mr. Scott's address as she could remember. They liked the exercise—it was not an imposed task. Their mistress either connived at or approved it. It became more frequent; and that it might be less open to disturbance, they used to retire into a closet which was attached to the school-room.

Martha was often thrown on her own resources, small as they were; nor did they prove less acceptable to her little auditors. On referring to these engagements only a few months since, she remarked,—"What I said to the children I have no idea. It was usually about religion and the Saviour. I was very earnest, and sometimes burst into tears, and not uncommonly we all [illegible] together." How far these tears were the pledges of [illegible] benefit, it is not needful to determine. It is, however, worthy of passing record, that several of the children who thus associated with her are now sustaining a consistent profession of godliness; and one of the number, with whom she was especially intimate, is the worthy and pious partner of an excellent minister in the Baptist denomination.

As her understanding expanded, Martha took an increasing interest in the public discourses of the ministry. She had hitherto found pleasure principally in the conversations of her parents, and in those addresses which were especially directed to children; but now, as she obtained power to connect the parts and comprehend the designs of a sermon, she felt herself profited, and the sense of profit afforded gratification. She became an attentive hearer of the word preached, and commenced a practice which she afterward continued, of noting, either on the Sabbath or on the ensuing day, what she could recollect of the discourses to which she had

attended. The specimens of this practice which I have by me are proofs of a diligent hand and retentive memory.

There are some brief passages in life to which the interest of years is given; in which impressions are made of a nature so powerful as to contribute largely in shaping the character and influencing the pursuits of the individual. One of these important periods it is now necessary to observe. It happened that Martha, in her fifteenth year, and in her accustomed attendance on the instituted means of grace, heard a sermon by the Rev. William Allen, then of Exeter, on *the devices of Satan*. The sermon was of course solemn and admonitory. She had probably heard many such before; but she had not been similarly affected by them. She had admired the preacher rather than thought of herself; she had been gratified rather than concerned. Now, however, truth was presented in new and convincing lights; she felt that there was something to be known of which she was ignorant: and her mind was urged, by its own uneasiness, to reflection.

Hitherto Martha's mind had been free from any continued uneasiness on religious accounts. She had been nurtured on the bosom of parental piety; her education had restrained her from many of the faults common to childhood; she rejoiced in the exercise of filial love and obedience; her sensibility sympathized with the affecting portion of Scripture history; her temper was cheerful, joyous, and unsuspicious: what wonder, then, if she had hastily concluded that she knew all it was necessary to know, felt all it was needful to feel, and did all it was requisite to do?

If any thing occasionally disturbed this state of self-satisfaction, it was the often-reiterated admonition of her anxious and beloved parents:—"Remember, my dear, *profession* is not *possession; pious education* is not *piety*, —the *form* of godliness will never save you." These exhortations had fixed themselves in her memory, while her mind was unprepared to appreciate them; but, now

that her eye was turned inwardly upon herself, they arose to her clothed with an importance they had never worn before, and gave force to those convictions of which she was so entirely the subject.

Martha's principal deficiency had been the want of self-inspection,—a defect that is never supplied but by religious influence. She had mourned over an evil temper, and confessed the criminality of a wrong action; but she had not inquired into the motives and principles of conduct: she had admitted the truth of our general depravity, but she had not realized it. And now that she was disposed to a sincere examination of her heart, she was surprised and pained at the discoveries which were made to her. In bringing her thoughts, her motives, and her affections to a high, holy, and spiritual standard, —a standard she had not before comprehended,—she found that the least offence, the least defect, exposed her to condemnation. She was constrained to admit that she had sinned, and come short of the glory of God; that, however well she might have thought of herself, or her connections have thought of her, she was "by nature a child of wrath even as others." She awoke as from a profound sleep; she had dreamed of peace and security, but she was awakened by the stings of an accusing serpent coiling round her heart.

These discoveries, in the first instance, were not acceptable to her mind. She could not welcome a light that revealed only forbidden objects; she could not at once throw up the hope and confidence in which she trusted; she was unwilling to allow that all her actions and thoughts partook "of the nature of sin;" and she considered it hard to exact a perfect obedience from imperfect creatures. The vague and general ideas she had of the Divine Mercy, and the way in which her susceptible mind had dwelt upon it almost exclusively, tempted her to consider it unsuitable for God to condemn for one offence as for many, and to connect with all offence a punishment as lasting as existence. She was anxious to abandon these sentiments; but Scripture and an en-

lightened conscience forced them upon her. Her mind was fretted, disappointed, mortified. She was disposed to complain of the Divine Providence, to think of God as an austere master and a severe judge; to say to the sovereign Ruler of the universe, "What doest thou?—why hast thou made me thus?"

This check to the current of penitential sorrow only increased its strength to overcome all resistance. Every day spiritual truth stood out to her view with distincter light and with greater prominency. The very dispositions which perplexed her were employed to fix those convictions on her mind which she was so desirous to reject. In proportion as the irritation of her thoughts yielded to reflection, she was astonished and confounded to find the temper of her mind in opposition to the government of God,—a Being she had thought she so truly loved. She found she had been loving and trusting a creature of her own imagination, and not the God of the Scriptures; that while she thought God altogether such a one as herself, she admired and approved; but when he became her reprover, and set her sins in order before her eyes, she was disposed to resist, to fight, to rebel. The truth burst upon her like a revelation. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God; neither, indeed, can it be!" The majesty, the forbearance, the purity, the mercy of God—the pride, the unbelief, the rebellion of her spirit, were all apparent to her. She cordially justified God, and condemned herself; she sank before the eternal throne, shedding the overflowing tears of generous contrition and godly sorrow. Hers was now the spirit and the language of the enlightened and humbled patriarch: "I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes: behold I am vile!"

Now came the great, the momentous question—What shall I do to be saved? The question and the reply had often been brought to her thoughts in the course of a religious education; but they had not been rightly under-

stood and valued. They had been in her memory like a prescription in the hands of a healthy man, unnoticed or disesteemed. To estimate the doctrine of salvation, it must be desired—desired above all things, from a conviction of its indispensable necessity. She now found herself to be in a state of imminent peril; she was alive to a sense of her helplessness in attempting her own deliverance; she felt herself in the condition of the disciple sinking amid the opening waves, and ready to perish; and her eye looked eagerly for an object to which she might attach her dying hopes, and from which she might bring peace to her troubled spirit.

To possess the theory of religion only is of high advantage. It is possessing the escape-ladder, which, though it may never have been used, is always ready for use when the hour of distress shall arrive. Thousands, from their ignorance of divine truth, have to inquire for the means of salvation when they should be intent only on their application. They are aware of their danger, but know not where their help is to be found; and they remain in a state of most fearful distress, if they are not precipitated into overwhelming despair.

From these perplexities Martha did not suffer. In the ruin of her existing hopes, she knew where her only, her last dependance must rest, and her eye turned spontaneously to that Saviour who is the hope and consolation of Israel. With this object her mind had been familiarized for many years; but it is important to mark the fresh lights in which it was now contemplated. Before, it was the Saviour's gentleness of temper, the benevolence of his heart, the innocence of his life, the distress of his circumstances, or the agonies of his final hours, that called forth her sympathy, while the more exalted parts of his character rested behind a veil which she had little desire to remove. Now, however, it was on these her thoughts most earnestly dwelt. The Saviour as Mediator; his engagements for man's redemption; his authority to forgive sins; his power to propitiate Divine justice, and bring near to us the infinite Mercy; his conquest over

our spiritual foes, and his bestowment of a renewing, sanctifying spirit,—these were the particulars in his character and work which were felt to be so needful to her condition. She searched the Scriptures afresh, and found that they testified of Him in a sense and with a power to which she had been hitherto a stranger. She saw that Christ was indeed the wisdom of God—the power of God—the Son of God—God himself, manifested in the flesh. It was apparent to her that the Saviour, possessing the nature of God and man, was qualified to stand in the breach and effect our reconciliation. A scheme of salvation lay before her above her hopes—above her thoughts: she could not doubt its suitableness—it was exactly what she wanted; she could not question its sufficiency—it was the production of inexhaustible love. "No," she remarked at this period, with peculiar emphasis, "I cannot for a moment doubt the ability or the willingness of Jesus to save to the very uttermost; my only doubt is whether I have come to him aright for salvation."

This doubt, while it proved her sincere and honest dealing with herself, was salutary in its consequences. It excited her caution, gave fervency to her prayers, and rendered her diligent and persevering in her inquiries. It had possession of her mind; but she could not grant it a quiet and continued residence. Her fears were raised by the presence of real and extreme dangers; and nothing could subdue them less than a real, reasonable, and Scriptural hope that they were removed. The approbation of God, the safety of her spirit, the right and cordial acceptance of the Redeemer, were things of infinitely too great importance in her esteem to be thought of with indifference, or suspended in voluntary doubt. She was not now hesitating in her determinations between God and Mammon, Christ and Belial; she was whole-hearted; and it was not in the power of youth, with all its buoyancy and thoughtlessness, nor of the world, with all its fascinating and unbroached delights, to give her spirit ease and comfort, till she had found a satisfactory reply

to that affecting question which is addressed to the conscience of every child of man—"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

The means were sincerely employed, and they were attended by the promised success. She asked, and received; she sought, and found; she knocked at the door of truth and mercy, and to her it was opened. Hope took possession of her mind; and the very perturbations which troubled it proved it also to be both sure in itself, and steadfastly fixed on the things which cannot be shaken. Her thoughts became tranquil, and they settled themselves intently on Him who is the author and finisher of our faith. She was particularly encouraged by observing the character of the Saviour's invitations, and the persons to whom they were addressed. He stood before her in all his mediatorial excellence and efficiency, as the helper of the helpless, the friend of the destitute, the surety of the debtor, the saviour of the lost. She approached unto Him, and put her trust under the shadow of his wings. She deliberately renounced whatever was contrary to the love of Him; and placed her reliance on his sacrifice and mediation for acceptance with the Father. She acknowledged Him as her first, her last, her only, her sufficient hope of salvation; and she committed herself, body, soul, and spirit, into his hands, to be redeemed from all evil, to be controlled by his divine authority, and to be modelled after his most holy will. In one word—she believed; and believing, she rejoiced with joy unspeakable; it was the joy of penitence—the joy of hope—the joy of love—the joy of gratitude—the joy of heaven!

These exercises of the mind, though they are brought within a few short paragraphs, were extended through many days, and even several weeks. With them, she was disposed to hope, commenced that change without which she could not expect to enter the kingdom of heaven. She might have been moved by the influence of the good Spirit at earlier periods; but she dared not conclude on the possession of an inward principle of

spiritual life, except as she was brought to discover her spiritual state, and raised to the love and pursuit of spiritual objects. Her thoughts were not occupied with curious and vain inquiries on the precise moment in which this life originated; she was content to trace its existence in its effects. She felt there was no comparison in the importance of the two questions—Do I live? and, When did I begin to live? Happily, God has furnished us with ample means of satisfaction on the one inquiry; while the other, except as we judge by the evidences of life, is, with as much wisdom and delicacy, veiled from our knowledge. Life of no class, vegetable, animal, or spiritual, is to be ascertained by detecting the vital principle; and yet it is, of all things, most apparent by its own outward expressions. A truth this, which, had it been properly regarded, would have preserved the minds of many from being diverted or perplexed by needless and impracticable inquiries; and would have given them, at once, an active and prospective direction.

Such a change, bringing the mind into accordance with the humbling truths of the Scriptures, and elevating it into sympathy with an invisible and eternal world, whatever may be the adaptation of means, must, without hesitation, be ascribed to the finger of God. I am aware that this allusion to a Divine agency will provoke the censure of the world. But it is a received maxim, even with the world, that the Deity may be introduced on an occasion worthy of himself; and can we conceive any thing more worthy of the Divine Mercy and Majesty than to illuminate, and sanctify, and restore to himself an immortal spirit, which has wandered from his feet, and is alienated from the life and blessedness it is alone qualified to enjoy?

Yet the world will exclaim, "This is a hard saying!" and the most candid, perplexed by a subject beyond the circle of their thoughts, will, with a teacher in Israel, demand, "How can these things be?" However mortifying to our pride and complacency, this question admits only one reply—These things, rightly to be understood,

must be truly experienced. To see the light we must be in the light. To comprehend a spiritual life we must live spiritually. "The natural man discerneth not the things of the spirit, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." He wants the answering faculty; and without this, his conceptions of a "life he does not live" will be as vague, as unreal, and as wild as the conclusions of the blind man who compared the colour of scarlet to the sound of a trumpet. But let him fear to deny what he does not perceive. These things are as *rational* as they are important. To deny the necessity of a divine change is to deny the uniform testimony of Scripture, supported by the voice of conscience, and the universal state of mankind. To deny its possibility is to deny a Providence, to sit in judgment on our Maker, to exclude him from the work of his own hands, and to say that the spirit he has formed, as his living temple, he has power neither to occupy nor to influence.

CHAPTER IV.

AFFLICTION. 1809.

LIFE is a progressive principle; and in its progress to vigour and maturity is often assisted by apparently adverse principles. The tree is frequently *distressed* that it may bear fruit; man is inoculated with disease that he may preserve his health; and the Christian is called to endure affliction that his divine nature may be purified from earthly adhesions, and shine out the brighter and the stronger.

It was the will of Providence that the good work begun on the mind of Martha should be established by suffering. It happened in the commencement of this year that Mrs. Wilks, the consort of the Reverend

our spiritual foes, and his bestowment of a renewing, sanctifying spirit,—these were the particulars in his character and work which were felt to be so needful to her condition. She searched the Scriptures afresh, and found that they testified of Him in a sense and with a power to which she had been hitherto a stranger. She saw that Christ was indeed the wisdom of God—the power of God—the Son of God—God himself, manifested in the flesh. It was apparent to her that the Saviour, possessing the nature of God and man, was qualified to stand in the breach and effect our reconciliation. A scheme of salvation lay before her above her hopes—above her thoughts: she could not doubt its suitableness—it was exactly what she wanted; she could not question its sufficiency—it was the production of inexhaustible love. "No," she remarked at this period, with peculiar emphasis, "I cannot for a moment doubt the ability or the willingness of Jesus to save to the very uttermost; my only doubt is whether I have come to him aright for salvation."

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to that affecting question which is addressed to the conscience of every child of man—"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

The means were sincerely employed, and they were attended by the promised success. She asked, and received; she sought, and found; she knocked at the door of truth and mercy, and to her it was opened. Hope took possession of her mind; and the very perturbations which troubled it proved it also to be both sure in itself, and steadfastly fixed on the things which cannot be shaken. Her thoughts became tranquil, and they settled themselves intently on Him who is the author and finisher of our faith. She was particularly encouraged by observing the character of the Saviour's invitations, and the persons to whom they were addressed. He stood before her in all his mediatorial excellence and efficiency, as the helper of the helpless, the friend of the destitute, the surety of the debtor, the saviour of the lost. She approached unto Him, and put her trust under the shadow of his wings. She deliberately renounced whatever was contrary to the love of Him; and placed her reliance on his sacrifice and mediation for acceptance with the Father. She acknowledged Him as her first, her last, her only, her sufficient hope of salvation; and she committed herself, body, soul, and spirit, into his hands, to be redeemed from all evil, to be controlled by his divine authority, and to be modelled after his most holy will. In one word—she believed; and believing, she rejoiced with joy unspeakable; it was the joy of penitence—the joy of hope—the joy of love—the joy of gratitude—the joy of heaven!

These exercises of the mind, though they are brought within a few short paragraphs, were extended through many days, and even several weeks. With them, she was disposed to hope, commenced that change without which she could not expect to enter the kingdom of heaven. She might have been moved by the influence of the good Spirit at earlier periods; but she dared not conclude on the possession of an inward principle of

eternal one! solemn thought! To recollect that I have been sixteen years in the world, and that so very, very little of that time has been devoted to the purpose for which I came into being! But I must stop and adore the Goodness which has spared me to this moment. O that we may be enabled to live more as dying creatures!"

"I hope the Lord will never suffer us to deceive ourselves. Let us pray much that he will search us and try us. Though our hearts are so deceitful, yet we may come to a knowledge of our characters; and how important is it to know this! It will make our afflictions pleasant; it will enliven our love and all our graces; it will teach us to look on all earthly things as straw and stubble, which are to be burned."

"I have just had another fit of coughing. If I should be removed from you, do not repine. Remember, the Lord brought us together, and we shall not be parted till he sees fit. O, my dear, let me entreat you to be sober and vigilant, because of your adversaries. Watch, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. My dear, heaven is worth striving for! To think of being for ever with the Lord! Let us determine, in the strength of Jesus, to knock, and to knock hard too, at the door of Mercy, till we gain admission."

"Faint, yet I hope pursuing. I am much afraid I have been deceiving myself, I have such a very deceitful heart; and, indeed, I hardly know what reasons I have for thinking I am a child of God. I dare not deny that a change has taken place in me, but I fear it is not a change wrought by the Spirit of God; I am so lukewarm, so cold and indifferent. You know every Christian has faith and humility, and I am afraid I have neither. I am afraid to hope, and yet afraid not to hope. This is a paradox, but you can understand it. O, my dear, pray for me, that I may be altogether, and not almost, a Christian!"

"I have had a great many doubts and fears lately. I find so much pride and unbelief in my heart, that I

think, at times, there cannot be any grace there. I am often afraid I am deceiving myself, and fear I am like the barren fig-tree. You know what the end of that is, though it appear ever so green and beautiful. May we bring forth much fruit—the fruits of the Spirit! This is a hard conflict; but let us rejoice that it is a conflict—that our enemies have it not all their own way—

'Still toss'd tempestuous on the sea of life,
My little bark is driven to and fro;
With winds and waves I hold unequal strife,
Nor can decide the doubtful course I go;
O may we reach that blissful shore,
Where storms and winds distress no more!'

"Let us never forget that we are travellers to an eternal world. To what *place* in that world are we bound? If to Canaan, we must remember there is a waste howling wilderness to pass through, innumerable enemies to fight, and a Jordan to cross: but let us not be discouraged; our enemies are mighty—our Saviour is almighty. He has said, 'Fear not, worm Jacob; my strength is made perfect in thy weakness.' O, my dear, humbly relying on this strength, let us go forth and fight courageously the battles of the Lord of hosts, not fearing that we shall come off more than conquerors through Him who hath loved us, and died for us, and will not withhold from us any good thing."

"I have felt my mind more calm since I saw you; but, alas! I am ready to fear it is a *false* calm. You will ask me my reasons. I think, if it were a true peace, I should be more humbled under a sense of sin, and should walk far more close with God. O, that we may lie humbled at the footstool of the Saviour, that we bear no more resemblance to him! And let us not rest here; but, with the greatest importunity, beseech him to give us his Holy Spirit, that he may conform our hearts entirely to his image."

These *variations* of mind, thus artlessly described, are

in some measure necessarily connected with the young Christian's experience. The very *strangeness* of his situation will produce them. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into his mind with a new and powerful illumination; and a thousand objects relative to himself and others, to this life and that which is to come, press upon his attention at once, awing him by their sublimity, and dazzling him by their brightness. He is in the circumstances of the blind man who is suddenly restored to sight. The innumerable objects which are at once presented to his view do not permit him to look on any without confusion and pain. It is not only needful that the faculty of vision should be perfect; there must be time to apply it separately to the different objects which present themselves, before he can assure himself that he distinctly sees them in the lights and distances in which they are really placed.

These alternations of hope and fear will also be promoted by the *intensity* of the interest, where the mind is sincere in its inquiries. It is fixed earnestly on things of extreme, of infinite importance. To be interested in the Divine favour which it has forfeited, and to escape the wrath to come which it has deserved, are blessings on which it exhausts all its reflections, and which yet it cannot fully appreciate. It is anxious above all things to reach a favourable conclusion, but shudders at the thought of reaching it upon false premises. Its very intentness on a decision—so awful, so desirable—holds it frequently in trembling suspense. The man whose mind is balancing between supposed or real trifles may preserve his indifference; but if he is pursuing an inquiry on the issue of which his property, his character, his life are to depend, what agitations of doubt and desire will necessarily possess him! Who, then, shall doubt the reasonableness or estimate the force of those anxieties which are associated with all that eternity can reveal, all that an immortal spirit can suffer or enjoy?

Although these anxieties will naturally spring from

the importance of the truths which are contemplated, and the freshness of the light which surrounds them, it must be admitted that they may be greatly prolonged or exaggerated by other circumstances. Martha was not so painfully affected by them as many; but she might probably have been less so, had her years allowed her to mark the influence of the body on the mind, and to discriminate between physical sensations and Christian principles.

Still less she might have suffered in this conflict of hope and fear, had she sought matured and sage counsel. But the young love to confide in the young; and she was content to have found a friend to whom she could freely unbosom herself. Her friend, similarly situated with herself, was well fitted to become a sympathetic companion; but she was not sufficiently advanced before her to be an experienced guide. In addition to the comforts of this friendship, had she sought the direction of her parents on the perplexities of her mind as they arose, she might have been sooner relieved. For the present, however, humility and respect threw undue restraints upon her; and she could only join generally in religious conversation, without alluding to any influence it exerted on her own spirit.

While these observations are thrown out as waymarks to others, it is pleasing to notice that these renewed perturbations of heart were overruled by a gracious Hand, to produce the best effects. The various views she took of her situation gave her deeper conviction of the impotence of her nature, and her liability to temptation and sin. Hope gathered resistance, like the elasticity of a spring, from the pressure of fear; her faith took the firmer grasp, because an enemy sought to shake it from its hold; and her love was ultimately borne more quickly to heaven by those winds which threatened to beat it down to earth. She yet more earnestly employed every instituted means of grace; she eagerly propounded to her parents questions of conscience, without noticing their relation to herself; and she diligently read, as she

had opportunity, those books which were suited to her temper, and illustrative of her experience.

Among the books which were thus perused was the "Rise and Progress of Religion," by the truly Christian Doddridge. From this work she received (who has not!) considerable assistance and benefit. It shed more light upon her way, and consequently gave more steadiness to her steps, and serenity to her heart. Here she met with a form of covenant, and with urgent exhortations to adopt it as her own. She was docile, and willing to be directed; but she was humble, and shrunk from so solemn and explicit a mode of engagement. Yet she felt that she had already virtually done what was here recommended, and she was disposed to construe her hesitancy in doing it more formally into a want of seriousness and sincerity. This jealousy of herself decided her in adopting it. It was readily embraced, as a means of satisfying herself that she had long been whole-hearted in the surrender she hoped she had already made to the Saviour of her body, soul, and spirit.

She was, however, too conscientious to employ any form of words, how excellent soever, with precipitancy. She passed over it sentence by sentence, and word by word; making every variation and omission which she found necessary to her full and cheerful acquiescence. Because it is thus varied, and because it is a hallowed and interesting document in her life, I shall not scruple to introduce it in closing this chapter, connected with her reflections upon it in a letter to her friend, who alone knew of the transaction.

I am aware that this practice has been condemned, on the one hand as enthusiastic, and on the other as pharisaical; and a writer of eminence has recently endeavoured to fix upon it, somewhat inconsistently, the entire weight of this two-fold objection. If these censures are directed against the *abuses* of the thing *only* they will receive the sanction of every sober mind. There have, undoubtedly, been extravagances of expression, and modes of signature, and a high self-confiding

temper manifested, which should be most seriously deprecated. But if these censures are meant, as is feared, to go beyond this, let it be remembered, that the practice which is so fully countenanced by Scripture, and has been so generally pursued by the wisest and most devoted of Christians, cannot be essentially wrong. And what is of infinitely greater moment, let it be distinctly felt that the *spirit* of the practice is the spirit of all religion. Self-dedication is of the very nature and essence of religion. If this is sincerely admitted, the mode of expressing it is comparatively of small importance, and the Christian may consult his individual benefit in coming to a decision. It is optional whether we "subscribe to the Lord with our *hand*;" but it is imperative that we subscribe to Him with the *heart*. "Circumcision," the mere sign of dedication, "is nothing;" and "uncircumcision," the want of that sign, "is nothing;" but "a new creature," the act of surrendering ourselves totally, and for ever, to God, against whom we have rebelled, *this is every thing!*

FORM OF SELF-DEDICATION.

"Eternal and unchangeable Jehovah! Thou great Creator of heaven and earth, and adorable Lord of angels and men! I desire, with the deepest humiliation and abasement of soul, to fall down at this time in thine awful presence; and I earnestly pray that thou wilt penetrate my very heart with a suitable sense of thine unutterable and inconceivable glories!

"Trembling may justly take hold upon me, when I, a sinful worm, presume to lift up my head to Thee, and to appear in thy majestic presence on such an occasion as this. Who am I, O Lord God, or what is my house! What is my nature or descent, my character and desert, that I should desire to be one party in a covenant, when thou, the King of kings and Lord of lords, art the other! I would blush and be confounded even to mention it before thee; but, O Lord, great as is thy majesty, so also is thy mercy. If thou wilt hold converse with any

of thy creatures, thy superlatively exalted nature must stoop, must stoop infinitely low! And I know, that in and through Jesus, the Son of thy love, thou condescendest to visit sinful mortals, and to allow their approach unto Thee, that they may give themselves to Thee for ever.

"To Thee, therefore, do I now come, invited by the name of thy Son, and, I hope, wholly trusting in his perfect righteousness and grace. Laying myself at thy feet with shame and confusion of face, and smiting upon my breast, I say with the humble publican, God be merciful to me, a sinner! I acknowledge, O Lord, that I have been a great transgressor. My sins have reached to the heavens, and my iniquities are lifted up to the clouds. And if thou shouldst be strict to mark my offences, I must be silent under a load of guilt, and immediately sink into destruction. But thou hast graciously called me to return unto Thee, though I have been a backsliding and rebellious child. Behold, therefore, I am come unto Thee. I come convinced, not only of my sin, but of my folly. Receive, therefore, I beseech Thee, thy revolted creature, who is now convinced of thy right to her, and desires nothing so much as that she may be entirely thine. Permit me, O Lord, to bring back to Thee those powers and faculties which I have ungratefully and sacrilegiously alienated from thy service.

"Blessed God! it is with the utmost solemnity that I make this surrender of myself to Thee. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: I avouch the Lord this day to be my God; and I avouch and declare myself to be one of his covenant children and people. Hear, O thou God of heaven, and record it in the book of thy remembrance, that henceforth I am thine, entirely thine! From this day do I solemnly renounce all the former lords which have had dominion over me, every sin, and every lust; and bid, in thy name, defiance to the powers of hell, which have, most unjustly, usurped the empire of my soul. All that I am, and all that I have, the faculties of my mind, and members of my body, my worldly posses-

sions, my time, and my influence over others, I consecrate to Thee. In thy service I desire to spend all the remainder of my time upon earth; and I beg that thou wouldest instruct and influence me so, that whether my abode here be longer or shorter, every year and month, every day and hour, may be used in such a manner as shall most effectually promote thine honour, and subserve the design of thy wise and gracious Providence. O blessed God! I would steadily persevere in this course, to the very end of life; earnestly praying that every future day of it may supply the deficiencies and correct the errors of the former; and that I may, by Divine grace, be enabled, not only to hold on in this happy way, but to become more active in it!

"Use me, O Lord, I beseech thee, as an instrument of thy service. Number me among thy peculiar people. Let me be washed in the blood of thy dear Son. Transform me more and more into his image. Impart to me, through him, all the needful influences of thy purifying, cheering, and comforting Spirit; and let my life be spent under those influences, and in the light of thy gracious countenance, as my Father and my God.

"And when the solemn hour of death shall come, may I remember this covenant of thine, well ordered in all things and sure as all my salvation and all my desire, though every other hope and enjoyment is perishing. And do thou, O Lord, remember it too! Look down with pity, O my heavenly Father, on thy languishing, dying child. Embrace me in thy everlasting arms. Put strength and confidence in my departing spirit; and receive it to the abode of them who sleep in Jesus, to partake in all the blessings of thy covenant, through Him who is the great Mediator of it. To whom, with thee, O Father, and thy Holy Spirit, be ascribed everlasting praises.

"MARTHA.

"*December 24th*, 1809."

"*Dec.* 28.—Last night I read the chapter on self-dedication again, and with feelings which I cannot

describe. I was tempted to think I was not sincere in wishing thus solemnly to give myself to the Lord; but with overflowing gratitude I may tell you, that these conflicts were overruled to make me more than ever willing to be entirely the Lord's."

"*Dec.* 29.—I tremble and rejoice! I have this night set my hand, that, from this time, I will be the Lord's. I know I need not say, pray for me; but let me beg you to pray, more earnestly than ever, that I may not openly and wilfully break my engagements! My mind, upon the whole, is calm."

CHAPTER V.

EXPANDING CHARACTER. 1810.

MARTHA, with every appearance of health, remained unwell through the early part of this year; and the mere continuance of unpleasant symptoms gave her friends the more alarm. As, in the summer, ministerial engagements called me to B——, I resolved to take her to the Hot Wells, hoping that the change of air and the use of the waters might afford her permanent relief. In this expectation we left our home in a chaise, and became for some weeks each other's sole or principal companion.

In such circumstances there is something favourable to the formation of friendship and the promotion of intimacy. The absence of all other familiar countenances; the opportunity of uninterrupted communion; the invigorating power of the living air; the novelties of changing scenery; and the sense of fellowship in all that cheers and gratifies; have an imperceptible influence in opening the heart. Our hearts had never been closed to each other; but the channels of sympathy had been obstructed by separation; and they now sought to recompense themselves by the most free and unreserved

intercourse. I still have distinctly the impression made by my sister's character, at this time, on my mind; and as it is consistent with my purpose, I shall endeavour to copy it into this narrative.

Nothing, at this period, was so immediately apparent as the lovely *simplicity* of her mind. This excellence had been always hers. With less sensibility, or a false education, it might have been alloyed by the debasing power of vanity. As it was, she had been rescued from this bindweed of the heart; and she was now presented, once for all, in the mirror of divine truth, with such a view of her character as furnished an effectual antidote to its influence. In her were no conceits so common to youthful inexperience; no affectations of qualities she did not possess; no confessions in which the heart did not sympathize; no hesitation of opinion and choice which perplexed and varied her steps.

Religion had placed one object, and one only, before her, as the one thing needful. Other things might be desirable; this alone was indispensable. She allowed nothing to stand in comparison with it; but pressed towards it with an undivided heart. Life was no longer in danger of being preyed upon by vacant listlessness, or frittered away by contrary and trivial claims. She had one single aim, one great pursuit before her, and it gave simplicity to her views, and steadiness to her course. She did not look at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things that are unseen and eternal. She had entered on the race; the unwithering laurels were before her. The clearness with which she saw the prize, and the frailties which shook her frame, made her judge herself to be near the goal; and she did not allow herself to be retarded by the thorns of needless controversy, or diverted by the impertinences of an indolent curiosity. Her eye was single, and her whole body was full of light. Hers was not merely the simplicity of nature and of youth, which is charming; it was "the simplicity of Christ," which is divine.

Religion also had shed over her mind its own *seriousness*. Her disposition had never been frivolous; now it

was not gloomy; but it was truly serious—a temper of mind which is the invariable companion of wisdom, and the germ of all moral excellence. So soon as the mind is engaged by any great and interesting objects, it necessarily becomes serious. Martha's thoughts had dwelt intently on the value of the soul, the solemnities of eternity, the grandeur of Deity, and the magnitude of the Saviour's redemption, and they diffused something of their own greatness and solemnity on her character. Every thing in this life was allied to immortality; nothing therefore was trivial. She had a race to run, and a conflict to sustain, whose consequences would reach to eternity—she would win or lose for ever—she could not be otherwise than serious. She had stood in the light of divine truth, and had communed with all that is great and glorious in the invisible world, and she could no more trifle than could Moses on descending from the mount of Divine habitation. This seriousness of mind rested on her whole deportment, rather than showed itself in particular instances; yet her correspondence with her friend, which I have already noticed, supplies one illustration worthy of remark. All her letters, at this time, commence with such mottoes as the following—"Eternity!" "Think of Eternity!" "Act for Eternity!" "Prepare for Eternity!" "Prepare to meet your God!"—a circumstance sufficient of itself to show how vivid were her conceptions, how deep her impressions of objects, above all others calculated to exalt and solemnize the thoughts.

Equally conspicuous was her strict *conscientiousness*. She had early been affected by ideas of the Divine omnipresence. These were become clearer and stronger; and were coupled with correct perceptions of the Divine authority. She now saw that the *reason* for every thing was to be found only in the will of God; and that this will was revealed exclusively in the Holy Scriptures. Her own partialities and desires, the opinions and examples of others, were not to regulate her. The word of God was to be her standard. She therefore sought to submit herself implicitly to it; desirous of believing

all it revealed, of doing all it commanded, and of avoiding all it proscribed.

An authority thus recognised gave importance to every thing on which it rested. Nothing, however trifling in itself, could be insignificant which was accompanied by the command or prohibition of God. The Scriptures therefore were her habitual counsellor. They were not only the title to her inheritance, but the map which delineated her daily course. She tried by them, not merely her hopes and principles, but her thoughts and temper. Yea, in the allotment of her time, the use of her money, the mode of her dress, the nature of her recreations, and the selection of her friendships, their voice was earnestly solicited and obeyed. Frequently at this period, when discussing opinions or practices of the professing world, she would observe, with a conscientiousness softened by humility—"This is very strange!—How can they reconcile it?—It *seems* directly opposite to Scripture—They should surely either reject the word of God or act upon it."

Benevolence, which was so early indicated in my sister, may be supposed to take a prominent place in her present character. In her childhood, what had the appearance of benevolence was very much the overflow of natural and instinctive feelings; but now these were moulded into an abiding and energetic principle. She had been taught to entertain the most lowly ideas of herself, which is an indispensable preparative to thinking kindly of others. She had sat at the feet of Him who is essential love, and His love constrained her to imitate his excellence. She had drunk into the spirit of that religion which breathes good-will to men, and peace over the face of the whole earth; and acting on a heart full of tender emotions, it produced the most humble devotedness to her Saviour, and enlightened anxiety for the welfare of all mankind.

The sincerity and strength of our benevolence are discovered, not by desiring great occasions for its exercise, but by diligently embracing those that offer. Martha had but small opportunities of doing good at present

but these she thankfully improved. She evinced a peculiar concern for the spiritual interests of her younger brother; she conversed freely with children and persons younger than herself on the subject now nearest her thoughts; and she expended all her pocket-money in purposes of benevolence, principally in the purchase of religious tracts for distribution among the poor.

Those who are seeking occasions of usefulness shall not fail to find them. It happened, that soon after our arrival at the Wells, a lady with her daughter engaged apartments in the same house. We soon learned the mother's tale of wo. She had come hither as to a forlorn hope, with her beloved, her only daughter, who had the most fatal symptoms of decline upon her, and she herself was a widow. Martha was deeply interested in the state of the sufferer; and by making herself of some use to the strangers, quickly opened a channel of intercourse.

She found the daughter to be about twenty years of age, of very amiable mind and manners. She had but recently known her danger, and she was literally confounded at the idea of dying, while she thought herself in the very midst of life. Presuming on this life, she had not thought of that which is to come; and the very sense of neglect made it doubly unwelcome. Martha, however, by her kindness, made her way to her heart, and soon afterward won her attention to the things which belonged to her peace. She died; but not, I trust, until she had drunk of those medicated waters which bring life and healing to the wounded spirit. Martha's name was among the last words that quivered on her lips; and it was one of those events to which my sister was accustomed to recur with eminent gratitude.

Nor must I omit to observe, that religion had awakened *tastes*, and opened sources of enjoyment, to which she had hitherto been nearly, if not entirely, insensible. She had never any relish for the common pleasures of the world. The glitter of the ball-room, the excitement of the card-table, the mimicry of the theatre, formed no temptation to her; her mind was above them. The theatre, especially

she was led to despise by a trivial and ludicrous occurrence.

When we were children at Mitcham, we stole out into the fair which is held at that place; and I, as the best expression of my love, resolved to treat my sister to the most respectable of all the exhibitions. We entered. I know not the subject of the play; but of course it was about love. A scene opened towards the middle of the acting, which presented us with a garden, containing a splendid monument, in which it was supposed a murdered lover was enclosed; which lover, however, was concealed behind the monument, to discover himself in due time. The lady entered with her tears and lamentations; and, as if the painted marble had been moved by her noisy sorrows, it trembled and fell. A man was revealed crouching beside it, and looking incomparably silly, and the woman ceased her wailings, and reflected his confusion. The spectators were mostly, like ourselves, children; and we burst into a hearty fit of laughter. The performers made their retreat by dropping the curtain. Martha never lost the impression made by this mummery. A playhouse to her was always a puppet-show, only varied by the expense of its ornaments and the skill of its imitations. As she became aware of the moral character of our theatres, and of most who attend them, her indifference deepened into aversion. She thought that those who could be made better by the theatre must be something less, and that those who could not be injured must be something more, than human.

While I knew that Martha's uniform simplicity and present seriousness saved her from the pursuit of those factitious and turbulent pleasures which are so fascinating to youth, I was not prepared to find a relish created for those gratifications which are as pure and exalted as they are beneficial. I knew that she had a feeling heart, and that her mind had been raised and enlarged by religion; but I was not expecting that already religion should extend its influence to objects beyond itself. Religion, however, is closely allied to all things good, beautiful, and noble; and in the heart she inhabits she

wakens sympathies towards them more effectually than can be done by any modes of moral or mental refinement, independent of her assistance.

Martha, though her attention had been confined chiefly to one object, though she had read but few books, and those mostly of one class, now discovered an attachment for whatever adorns the mind, or enlarges the capacities for real happiness. She had a taste, not indeed at present a cultivated one, for music, for painting, and for poetry, but especially for nature; whence, as from an inexhaustible treasury, we borrow, poorly borrow, all that is harmonious in sound, all that is lovely in picture, and all that is eloquent in poesy. Every thing in nature suited the simplicity of her mind and the piety of her thoughts. There she met with God; and all was interesting to her which was the work of his hand. She admired the lily and the rose, since His hand adorned them; she sympathized with the sparrow and the robin, since His hand protected them, as she had never done before; and her ravished eye dwelt on all things beautiful on earth, or bright in heaven, as formed by her Saviour's power, embellished by her Saviour's excellence, and continuing for her Saviour's glory.

Tastes thus quickly formed by religion and the Scriptures I was anxious to exercise and strengthen; and our daily walks and rides in the charming vicinity of C—— and B—— afforded the most excellent opportunities. Martha had not been twenty miles from the metropolis before; and, what with the novelty of the scenes, the still-abiding freshness of religious enjoyment, and her first becoming fully conscious of extended capacities for happiness, her cup of joy was often full even to overflowing. I necessarily connect the finest points of scenery in that neighbourhood with the thought of her, and the expressions of her countenance, varied as they were by wonder and delight; but there is one evening's walk stands out among the pictures of my imagination as superior to the rest in the interest it excited, and, I trust, in the good which it bestowed.

After taking a quiet tea, and reading a portion of some

favourite volume, we went abroad to partake the coolness of the coming evening. I was secretly feeding on the pleasure of surprising Martha with the scenery on the banks of the A——. To accomplish this, I led her down, by the zigzag path at the back of the pump-room, that the view might break upon her at once. I had chosen the hour and the evening with a reference to the general good effect of the whole; and when we reached the point of observation, I was not a little gratified to find every thing around and above us looking as well as I could desire.

The river, which flows in the lap of hills that seem to have been separated by some great convulsion in nature, was rising with a strong and rapid tide, and bearing on its bosom, in the distance, some vessels, which, with their sails dancing in the wind, were hastening to their port. The rock-work on one hand sprang so directly and abruptly from the path as to have an elevation to the eye which the lofty mountain sometimes fails to possess. On the opposing side, with considerable boldness of contour, there were more sloping and undulating lines, so that the rifted surface was plentifully decorated with the beauties of vegetation; and where the rock itself appeared, it was enriched by those living hues which the touch of time can alone impart. On either hand, the rocks, with all their irregularities, inclined towards each other in beautiful perspective, and at length appeared to unite, enclosing the waters and vessels in their arms, and giving a compression and a consequent magnitude to the entire scene. The sun had once more travelled to the west; and his rays shot across this picture so as to give his brilliancy to one-half of it, while the remainder was clothed in shadows of a thousand shades. Above us was a fine blue sky, rendered finer by the dark lines of rock-work which conducted the eye to it; and in the far-ground, the clouds were resting on the hills, some shining in crimson glory, and some soft and gray, like aerial mountains.

Not only the scene itself, but the class of scenery, was altogether new to Martha; and it inspired her with

greater admiration than any thing she had already seen. When her eye had dwelt on the whole in silent pleasure, we walked gently forward, remarking the characteristic beauty of the several parts, till, in the review, they composed an entirely different picture. The hills which were now around us went off in softer and radiated lines, so as to form a natural amphitheatre. The underwood shot up in these rising and expanding galleries with greater luxuriance, and was finely relieved by the aspiring heads of the oak and the elm; while the bolder rocks we had left, with their feet in the river, and their heads apparently in the clouds which hung over the distant horizon, constituted a noble back-ground. Twilight had crept over the scene, and had shed its repose over every thing. All human objects had disappeared. The breeze had ceased to murmur, and the waters to ripple. Nothing was heard: nothing was in motion, except the river, which was still flowing, but flowing in silence. Our steps and conversation alone seemed to disturb the tranquillity. We sat down beneath some hazel branches, which sprang from the fissures of the rock; sank into meditation; and all—all was profoundly still.

In such a place, on such an evening, and at such a period of life, we might "have thought down hours to moments;" but I was fearful my sister would hazard too much in a lengthened continuance. I turned my eye upon her, designing to express my fears; but I did not catch her attention, and was unwilling to disturb it. She never appeared so interesting to me! The gentlest lights of the dying day dwelt on her countenance. That countenance, originally so full of vivacity, had been subdued by pain, and raised by piety; and it now was expressive of elevated intelligence and pensive delight, beyond any thing I had observed. Her glistening eye, directed to heaven, told me that her spirit had ascended by things visible to those which are invisible; and her speaking lips seemed to say that her conversation was in other worlds. Her eye fell on mine. "Brother!" she exclaimed, with a sweet and blushing face, while the tear of joy and affection started and fell. I embraced

her, and rejoiced in her, not merely as a sister, but as a saint. We had always found happiness in each other, yet never such happiness as now. In childhood, our joys, though complete in their kind, were animal and sensitive; now, I trust, they could claim kindred, however humbly, with those which are not only intellectual, but spiritual.

We bent our steps towards home reluctantly, sometimes listening to the solemn stillness, and sometimes giving utterance to the prevalent emotion. I quoted part of Cowper's beautiful Hymn on Retirement, and Martha repeated some of the pastoral Psalms of David. Before we quitted the spot, the young moon had risen, like a crescent, over the bold forehead of rock-work, illuminating our path, printing its own bright image on the sleeping waters, and casting its light on the opposite hills, so as to make them appear through the mist, which hung over them like a gauzy transparent veil. That was a blessed evening! And it was the more so, because we felt it derived all its blessedness from Him who is a well-spring of living joy to those who fear his name!

Digressive as some parts of this chapter may appear, I cannot leave this sketch of my sister's character without observing that religion, which had done so much for her, did not fail to create earnest desires *for mental and religious improvement*. It was not merely gratification she sought, it was advancement. She found herself to be a child in knowledge, and was not willing to remain so. She had drunk of the waters of life, and she longed to drink again. New worlds, the rational, the moral, the eternal, were open before her, and she was eager to explore them. The serious views she had taken of human life made it a duty to seek the improvement of every talent she possessed; and the taste she had had of better things than worldly wisdom regards made it her settled desire and purpose.

I had formerly endeavoured to engage her in some studies which I considered would be of permanent advantage to her; but she commenced them rather from affection to me than from any sense of their real value. The inward native relish was wanting; and her resolu-

tion failed to overcome the difficulties which clog the entrance to every new and serious pursuit. Now, I found her with an inquisitive mind, and keen appetite for the bread of knowledge. She was most desirous of becoming acquainted with whatever in science might render her useful to others; whatever in literature might correct and purify her taste; and whatever in religion might assist her in rightly conceiving of herself, of God, and of immortality. With such dispositions the work of instruction was easy and delightful. We had many desultory conversations on mental improvement, while together; and I engaged, on our reunion in London, to become, as our mutual opportunities should allow, her teacher; thus adding one more tie to the many which bound us together.

On the whole, I think the intercourse of this period was as profitable as it was pleasing. It was beneficial to me to witness on another the holy and exalting power of religion; and I was unspeakably gratified to find that a beloved sister was advancing with her growth in every thing lovely and excellent. My pleasure, too, was without a check, as I daily saw her health improving; and that it might be as fully confirmed as possible, it was determined that her stay should be prolonged beyond the original time, indefinitely. After introducing her, therefore, to a few kind friends, I left her, and returned to the metropolis.

CHAPTER VI.

EMBARRASSMENT. 1810.

UNQUESTIONABLY the most sacred duty of the biographer is *to state the truth*. I do not understand, however, that in the most conscientious discharge of this duty, it is necessary to state *all* that is true. Much that is trivial

and detached may be suppressed, not only without injury, but with advantage; the character of the individual, in its formation and progress, may be the more completely exhibited, as the artist gives a more striking likeness by getting rid of useless habiliments. On the contrary, every thing may be told, and told with the utmost particularity, while the verisimilitude of the person is lost, and the *general impression* arising from the narrative is substantially false. The leading concern, therefore, of the biographer, will be to give that place and that weight to every event connected with the subject of his memoir which shall leave on the mind the truest impression of the living character. Good taste will prevent him accumulating minutiæ, which, if they do not reveal, will encumber his portrait; and integrity will forbid him concealing any occurrences, how delicate soever in themselves, which are indispensable to its truth.

In this record of my sister I am certainly desirous of being, not her eulogist, but her biographer. And if the previous remarks are somewhat apologetical, it is because in attempting to support that appellation, I find it necessary to enter on difficult ground. Were it a mere question of feeling, I might possibly avoid it altogether; but as it forms an important passage in her life, and contributes largely to the progress of her mind, I have no option. While, however, I notice occurrences which are acknowledged to be delicate, I hope they will be treated delicately; and then I am convinced, in discharging the duties of the historian, I shall not violate those of the brother.

When I left Martha, at a distance from home, it was with every sentiment of satisfaction. Her health was advancing, her spirit was happy, and she was beneath the protection of Christian friendship. But, alas! where in this world shall we find perfect safety? Trial and snares cross the most secure and retired path, like the gossamer web in autumn, as quickly and as imperceptibly!

Among the persons to whom I had introduced

Martha during my stay was a young man, an acquaintance of mine. He had seen her twice or thrice in my presence, and I had no idea of his seeking her society on my departure. He did, however, call upon her; in the first instance, perhaps, from regard to me, but afterward for his own gratification. He introduced her to his family, and sought opportunities of meeting her elsewhere. He was of an open temper, and ardent passions. He had been lately interested in religious objects, and he talked of them with liberty and feeling. He was a professed admirer of the poets; some of his favourite passages he read to her, and others he extracted and put into her possession. In a word, he showed her most marked and particular attentions.

Martha was still in her seventeenth year. Her thoughts had been as little directed to matrimony, or the preliminary steps to it, as those of any, the most pure of her sex. On this subject, she had all the innocency of the dove, but without the sagacity of the serpent; she knew little of human character beyond what she read in her own heart. Her modesty had always restrained her young friends from making it the matter of conversation or merriment; and her imagination had not been inflamed, her mind perverted, by the perusal of extravagant and ill-principled fictions.

These attentions, therefore, while they were such as might be offered indiscriminately to any young person, were received with simplicity and gratitude, as a proof of respect for her beloved relative; and when they became an unequivocal expression of something more, she was anxious and disconcerted. She was most desirous of shunning them altogether; but the difficulties of her situation seemed to make it impossible.

It happened that a matronly person, who had recommended herself to Martha by her kindness and piety, had early noticed these attentions. By many hints she had dropped, Martha was aware of this, and she thought the best use to be made of it was to confess the sense of impropriety which possessed her, and to crave the advice

of one who had been a mother and a wife, on the best means of meeting the difficulty.

But this good lady, with very slender capacity to give advice on such delicate subjects, was one of those persons who have an avowed pleasure in *bringing young people together*. She was not, therefore, in the least inclined to confine her counsel within the limits which Martha had prescribed to it. She assumed at once that Martha's uneasiness was quite unnecessary; and then descanted freely on the folly of discouraging an individual to whom, and to whose connections, she could allege no objections. Martha waived all remark in her reply on the person himself, and contented herself with objecting on account of her youth, but "it was a good thing for young people to be early attached;" her health, but "she was getting well every day;" her separation from her parents, "her parents certainly ought to know, but there was time enough for that."

From the spirit of this advice Martha's heart involuntarily shrunk; but it left her more irresolute what to do, and not less uneasy at remaining as she was. She pondered anxiously her situation; and the more it was the subject of reflection, the more she felt that the notice taken of her was such as, in her present circumstances, she ought not to sanction; while it was of such a character as to make it difficult to decline, without an assumption which modesty forbade her to make. She did not blame the cause of her secret perplexities; but she became increasingly embarrassed and unhappy.

No alternative seemed left to her except hastening her return to London. She therefore wrote to her parents, enlarging on the improved state of her health, and begging that, as the end of her visit was so well accomplished, she might be restored to the bosom of her family. The required permission was granted; and Martha, with a glad heart, fled, like the wandering nestling, from a sense of exposure and solitariness, to the warm embraces of her family.

Martha had reached her home, but failed to find all that quiet happiness which till now was identified with

the place. Her distress while at C——, and her eagerness to return to her friends, had convinced her that her mind was perfectly free; alas! she was not prepared to see that this very eagerness gave alarming testimony to the contrary. She was therefore surprised and concerned to find, when she had realized the separation which was at once to deliver her from thought and feeling, till thought and feeling should be proper, her mind involuntarily reverted to the scenes she had quitted; and that occasionally the recollections it presented would raise a sigh or a tear, which she strove to repress and could not.

In her prospective return, too, it had been her spontaneous purpose to confer fully with her parents; but now she possessed the opportunity of doing so, she had no wish to employ it. Habit and conscience often urged her to it; yet when about to make the attempt, her tongue was locked, her lips were sealed; and she met their unwelcome pleadings with the best excuses the case could supply. She would urge upon herself that she had really nothing to say—that nothing might ever come of it—that if any thing should, it would necessarily first reach her father—and then would be the time to explain—and till then she would resolve not to think of it—and the only sure way to avoid thinking was to avoid speaking. Thus she sought to delay what it was so difficult to do. It was too late for her to see that her excuses were vain; that it would have been easy to confer with her friends had her thoughts been wholly uninterested; or that the very difficulty in now doing so was a powerful argument against further delay. Alas for us! how few are the precious moments of reason! They are only those in which passion is dormant; when this sorceress is awakened, she casts her illusive lights on all things—she blinds the sight of the weak, and discolours that of the strongest.

The act of separation, which is commonly such a touchstone of friendship, was operating very differently on another party. Martha had declined entering on any correspondence without the approbation of her parents;

and of course it was the business of the person seeking such intercourse to make the application. She had abundant reason to think the event of such an application would quickly be tried; but, from whatever cause, weeks passed away, and nothing transpired.

The worst effect of this omission on Martha was, that it supplied her with an excuse for allowing her mind to return to the subject. She persuaded herself that she was indifferent what reply might be given to the question by her friends, if it were only fairly proposed. But while it was not put, and while she could not entertain a doubt of the honour of the person who was bound to put it, she thought herself at liberty to recur to the state of suspense; she did not ask herself whether she could distinguish between the *state* of suspense and the *subject* of it.

Martha had promised a correspondence with the lady to whom a reference has already been made; and she now looked to it as the likely means of delivering her from suspense. On her part, there was a careful avoidance of the subject; but on the side of her friend, this was not expected, nor, to say the truth, desired. Her letters were now received with an eagerness for which Martha was not anxious to account; and, if they did not contain some allusions to a nameless party, she was more disappointed than she was willing to admit.

This unacknowledged expectation, however, had not to suffer much of disappointment. Her friend always met the subject as a favourite one. She was the more earnest in it because Martha had, once for all, dismissed it, and begged that it might be forgotten. She contended, that if the step which it was honourable to take had not been taken, it must be ascribed to an adequate cause. She said every thing she knew, and imagined more, as likely to produce a delay. And she uniformly communicated whatever she could that was calculated to impress the mind favourably of the party and his connections.

This was sincerely and kindly done, but not wisely. It was giving stimulants where sedatives are required.

It was keeping the attention awake to a subject on which it should have been induced to sleep. In this medium, too, she could dwell on it with more of self-deception—it was *her friend's letters* for which she was looking. And these letters occurring at short intervals, not only kept her thoughts alive, but imparted to them, from time to time, most dangerous nourishment.

Our passions, those enemies to our peace, assail us, like the Roman gladiator, with a sword in one hand and a snare in the other; and the sword is often brandished only to allure the attention from the snare which is to overthrow us. Martha might have been prepared, by her simplicity and delicacy, to resist any open attack; but her inexperience and susceptibility blinded her to the wiles of her foe. Her feet therefore had been from the first imperceptibly entangled; and what from uneasiness, suspense, disappointment, and the injudicious counsels of friendship, the nets were only gathered more inextricably about her.

As month after month rolled over her, Martha had power more clearly to watch the workings of her troubled bosom. Reflection was forced upon her; and as she reflected, she was carried unconsciously to the conclusion that she had been disposed to give a preference to one who was unworthy of it. Had this conclusion, heart-sickening as it was, been admitted, it might have roused every thing feminine in her character to a victorious struggle; but it was resisted and put down. It was too foreign to her heart readily to admit a suspicion of a character which had won her esteem by its show of piety, generosity, and feeling.

Yet, while she refused to recognise this conclusion, her conduct began to be regulated by its influence. The thought of her heart not only shrunk more decidedly from every other eye, but shunned instinctively her own observation. It breathed no sigh, shed no tear, preferred no complaint, uttered no reproach; but it preyed silently, constantly, upon her inmost spirit.

Martha strove, powerfully strove, to be to her friends what she had uniformly been; but her *choice* was to con-

ceal herself from all mankind. Her solitude, however, was without restraints, and she could no longer fill it with useful pursuits. She would sit, with an introverted eye, from hour to hour, poring on the conflict of her feelings, till she sunk into revery and abstraction. Her bright morning of joy had been suddenly overcast; and all the gilded prospects which opened to the eye of youth in endless perspective were enveloped in a thick gloom that she thought would never more be dispersed!

Martha uttered no reproaches; nor is her brother disposed to employ the language of reproach; the subject is too sacred. But à *principal end* of introducing this chapter would be lost, if it were not rendered *cautionary* and *instructive*. Those, I trust, of Martha's sex and age would be especially open to receive benefit from this portion of her history. Let them accept all common attentions with that unconstrained kindness which is their proper reward; but the moment these attentions would assume another character, let them pause and decide on the state of their mind. If the mind is averse to them, let them be steadily discouraged till they cease; and if there is no objection arising to them, let the voice of parents, or, in the want of them, of some judicious friend, be solicited; and let them advance not a step further until they have the sanction of those whose authority they are bound to respect, and possess an exact understanding on the ground of their intercourse. If these proprieties of conduct are not thought of by the suitor, there is much the greater need that they should be regarded by the person solicited.

Where the judgment has once decided, be severely jealous of any after-pleading of feeling. From no loose ideas of honourable intentions—suitable connection—difficulty of resisting—sentiments of humanity—invincibility of passsion—or a thousand other imaginings—allow yourself to hesitate or to trifle. You are on enchanted ground. The inclination that leads you there is likely to leave you there till you are fascinated and ensnared. In such temptation your safety is in flight, and the flight is for your life! "Avoid it, pass not by

it, turn from it, and pass away." Let not the thoughts revert to the forbidden object. There are some objects, which, like the Geysers of Iceland, while we admire them, scald us.

It must be conceded, that the kindest parents, in the very exercise of their kindness, sometimes err in the treatment of this delicate subject. From the manner in which they have too often seen it held up to young and innocent minds, as the end and scope of all education, of all hope, and of all effort, they have turned away in disgust, and have not stopped till they arrived in the opposite extreme. They have wholly proscribed the subject in conversation; they have exercised a visible jealousy over every thing that led to it, without assigning their reasons; and if the feelings connected with it have, in general life, at any time, risen to their view, they have submitted them, at once, either to ridicule or to condemnation.

Now, there may be much more of good principle and feeling in the one case than the other; but it may be doubted whether, in their consequences, both are not equally injurious. Certainly the determined avoidance of the subject cannot prepare the young and unsuspicious to meet it with prudence and wisdom; and the slightest knowledge of the human heart will convince us that such a mode is not likely to exclude it from the thoughts. To our nature, alas! the forbidden fruit is ever the most inviting.

It will be well, too, if, when the hour of trial comes, such a method do not dispose our child to withhold her confidence. She would, no doubt, violate her duty in doing so; but if, with every thing to encourage her, there is so much to be overcome before she can commit her secret thoughts to her dearest friend, what must be the power of filial devotion to enable her to approach a subject which has always been made inaccessible, and to reveal sentiments which have never been regarded with sympathy? Is it wonderful if, under such circumstances, the young heart has shrunk from its duty for the first time; and thus lost, in its deepest need, the advice

and confidence of the most natural and valuable of friends?

May not the better course be, in this case, as it is allowed to be in almost every other, that which is most direct and open? Since the thoughts will run in this direction, more or less, is it not better to provide them with a safe and proper channel, rather than, by vainly resisting their progress, to cause a most dangerous accumulation? Let not the subject become a topic of usual discourse; but let this be avoided, not by a formal prohibition, but by the general tone of parental authority and character. On the fit occasion, let it be met with candour and seriousness. Let it be stripped of all mystery, that curiosity may have no nourishment. Let it have its fair weight among the events of life. Balance against its fascinations, its responsibility, and against its promises of happiness the hazards to which it exposes that happiness. Let there be sufficient familiarity on the subject between the parent and child, that she may feel the way to it accessible whenever she may desire to use it. Let her just sentiments be approved, her extravagant ones qualified; and her every sentiment, how foolish and trivial soever, be sure of a patient hearing, and a sympathizing heart.

Particularly it is of moment that this confidential intercourse should not be postponed to too late a period; the young mind has often thought and felt much on the subject before the guiding hand has directed it to those reflections which may fortify it in the hour of attack. It is needless to say it has been premature; then its affectionate guardian must condescend to be premature likewise. Wisdom will always prefer the means of prevention to those of cure; but in this case they have a stronger claim to preference than in almost any other. The remedy may be applied to the wounded spirit with *hope*; but the lessons of wisdom, falling on a heart still at rest, shall distil as the dew, and reward the strongest *confidence*.

In conclusion, what shall be said of those young persons who, bounding fresh on the novel scenes of life,

and intent only on their own gratification, trouble the peace of many a happy spirit, by successively offering such attentions as nothing could justify but their continuance and rightful consummation? The *least* that can be said is, that such a course begins without honour, and ends without satisfaction. Is it to be pleaded that the intentions were honourable, that no promise was violated, and that the most that can be censured is thoughtlessness? Let the plea have all the weight it deserves; but let it be remembered, however, that many a promise may be made, such as Heaven will sanction, and every honest mind consider binding, where not a line is written—not a word uttered. If honourable intentions are to be urged, let it be understood that these only exist as they are sustained by honourable conduct; and that he who can pay flattering attentions to one person which he would not to any other person in like circumstances, and carelessly transfer them to a second, may indeed possess good principles, but in this instance is not actuated by them.

Can it be endured, that on so serious a subject utter thoughtlessness is to be pleaded in extenuation? Because I judge myself secure, am I to be careless of the danger of another? Because I can trifle, am I to trifle on, indifferent to the wounds I may probably inflict on a mind less gross and more susceptible than my own? Thoughtlessness! Inconsideration! Let him who, in reckless inconsideration, wantonly wounds a tender and innocent spirit, and eventually seeks his connubial happiness elsewhere, enjoy it as he may! There is a Hand above him that registers in fearful characters the deed of folly and of negligence. And O, if there be any sorrow natural to our suffering state that makes its way direct to heaven, it must be that pure, deep, unutterable sorrow of the virgin heart, which scorns to tarry on earth, and which arises from insincere professions and inconstant attachments!

CHAPTER VII.

MENTAL EXERCISES. 1810–1811.

SENSIBILITY has had her honours done by a thousand hands, and her praises sung by a thousand voices. With her admiring votaries she is the substance of every virtue, and the soul of every grace. Were such expressions simply extravagant, they might pass; but as they are hurtful, it is necessary to correct them. Let her young and fond admirers know, then, that sensibility is a gift, like some we read of in Arabian story, of doubtful character, and which will benefit or injure us *as it is used*. As the handmaid of an enlightened mind, she bears the key which commands the richest treasures of earth and heaven; as the mistress of a weak and enslaved judgment, she "shows the path and leads the way" to chambers of vexation, anguish, and despair. Without sensibility there can be no enjoyment; without something more and better, our very enjoyments are poisonous.

An excess of sensibility was the weakness of Martha's character; but she was not yet aware of it. Already we have seen something of its unfavourable and dangerous influence, and we must continue to trace it in more serious connections.

The distress of the heart is not limited to place or subject; wherever it may spring, it spreads itself over the whole soul, and all its engagements. Happy as Martha had recently been in her religious enjoyments, her happiness was deeply affected by the present state of her mind. She could no longer engage in the most sacred exercises with her accustomed pleasure. She had lost her earnestness in prayer, her quietude in meditation, her joy in the house of God, and her elasticity in performing the works of love and mercy. Her thoughts were dis-

tracted; her will was fluctuating; her imagination was wayward and rebellious; and her heart was restless. The restlessness of her spirit was communicated to every service of the closet and the sanctuary, and she became growingly weary of exercises which her conscience could not approve, and by which her mind was not tranquillized.

So painful a state of mind was dangerously aggravated by Martha's susceptibility. This temper obscured the lights that still remained on her path, and made the darkness such as could be felt. It exaggerated the dangers of her situation, and discouraged her from seeking deliverance. It magnified the character of her offences, and forbade her to lift her hands for pardon. It debilitated her resolutions, resisted her hopes, and multiplied her sorrows. It made what was perplexed, inexplicable; what was gloomy, terrible; what was bad, worse. This very temper, which in her happy moments had disposed her to dwell unduly on the Divine mercy, now, when its consolations were wanting, presented to her only distorted and hopeless images of the Divine justice.

In this dark and dreary day of the soul, ignorant as she was of the Christian conflict, assailed by a condemning conscience, and weakened and depressed by her constitutional infirmity, Martha's hope had perished had it been of human mould, or sustained by human energy. But her hope was divine and Scriptural. It was cast down, but not destroyed. It was often conquered, but it continued to resist. The winds blew against it, the rains fell upon it, the floods swelled and raged about it; but it remained,—for it was built upon a rock.

Martha, in the first reverse of her experience, was little disposed to favour the struggles of this living and irrepressible principle within her. She discredited its suggestions; she questioned its nature; and was inclined rather to yield herself to the calm of despondency, than continue in the agitations of conflict. Her heart had been paralyzed by fear which her sensibility had nurtured; it was worn and exhausted by ceaseless warfare; and she seemed resolved to seek rest somewhere, though it

should be on the ground of an enemy. The utmost that hope could do for her was to make her state less dangerous, without making it more easy; it kept her unwillingly awake to a sense of her exposure and unhappiness.

Towards the close of the year, Martha revealed her distress to me, most carefully avoiding any remark which might have led me to what she was determined to conceal. We had not been much together since we parted at B——; and the contrast of her present with her former appearance struck me painfully. Her feverish hand, her flushed complexion, and her agitated frame told me that disease had renewed its influence; and that her mind was robbed of that serene joy which possessed it so fully, when it was our privilege to hold daily and free communion. I have no distinct recollections of our converse on this occasion; but the substance of it is on my memory, and as far as it is to my purpose, I shall bring it under notice.

It will immediately be seen, that in giving advice to my sister, I was in similar circumstances with the medical attendant prescribing for a patient who purposely withholds one-half of his case, and yet expects relief. I was likewise discouraged by my limited acquaintance with the changes and trials of Christian experience. The most I could do was, not to apply the *best remedies* with the greatest skill, but to apply, with a gentle hand, those remedies which I had lately found effectual to my own healing.

I soon perceived that Martha's chief sorrow arose from the serious doubts which possessed her on the reality of her religious professions. She had incautiously mingled her hopes with her enjoyments; and now that these were gone, she was tempted to think nothing was left; that she had been deceived herself, and had deceived others; and that her religion had been superficial and transitory as the morning cloud, which passes away and is seen no more.

Without offering any distinctions between the joys that are false and those that are real and Scriptural, which might have perplexed her, I attempted at once to show that her present desponding conclusions were not authorized by her existing state of mind. To accom-

plish this object, it was my concern to illustrate the Christian course as a course of inward warfare. I saw that, with most young disciples, Martha, while she admitted the doctrine of a continued conflict in the Christian life, had not fully realized it to herself. When therefore this portion of her creed was reduced to experimental certainty, her faith and hope were unsettled; she was led to imagine that some trial had happened to her which was not common to the saints.

I insisted that her case was not peculiar, but common to the people of God; that conflict was not an *accident* of Christian life, but essential to it; that it belonged not to the commencement of this life, but that it ran through every stage of it; that it was not a conflict merely with the world, with the powers of darkness, or with the disorderly appetites of the body, but that it was a deep, inward, unceasing warfare against *ourselves*—our original and strongly-rooted principles, desires, and propensities. I supported my remarks by the masterly and admirable exposition of the subject in the 7th of Romans; and maintained, with the apostle, that a constant and decided conflict of the spirit against the flesh, of grace against sin, of the new nature against the old, painful as it may be, is both a more *safe* and *accessible* evidence of Christian character than the most assured hopes or abounding joys.

My next effort was to prevent her anxious search into the *past* for the proofs of her sincerity, when her thoughts might be profitably directed to her *present* duty. I urged that it was really of little moment whether she could or could not obtain this satisfaction, compared with *believing now* on the Son of God. That what *we have been* is not to discourage the sinner, or to prevent the saint, from making an immediate application to the Saviour. That religion in its very nature is a continued intercourse with him; it is living in him, moving in him, and deriving from him, habitually, sanctity and grace. That we are always to be "coming" unto him as though we had never come before, confessing our sins, reposing on his righteousness, and imploring his salvation.

I pointed out, with earnestness, that if these views were important in every state of the Christian life, they were particularly so to her under her present darkness of mind and perplexity of evidence. I enforced the necessity, without seeking for obscured evidences, without waiting for an improved experience, of her simply acknowledging her felt demerit and sin, and pleading the unfailing promises of mercy to the unworthy; and I assured her, with the confidence of proof, that this would greatly assist in baffling her adversaries, and breaking the spell which her distressing fears had cast upon her.

In conjunction with these observations, I referred her to some parts in Newton's Letters, Stafford's Sermons on the 7th of Romans, and Gurnall's Christian Armour, which I had recently read with advantage, that she might peruse them at leisure.

Martha's doubts, however, were not entirely confined to her *personal interest* in the blessings of revelation; they were sometimes extended to the truth and genuineness of revelation itself. When her enemies could not succeed in wholly driving her hopes from their hold, they sought to shake the very foundations on which they rested. Hitherto, Martha had given her faith to revelation on the force of its internal and experimental evidence. It had revealed her thoughts, and given her the express image of her character; she had tasted and felt its proposed blessedness. This was the most efficient of all evidence, and she had been satisfied with it. But now, when she was tempted to doubt the reality of all she had felt and enjoyed, she was led occasionally to ask, whether the very truths themselves on which she had built might not also be illusive and unauthorized.

A sense of ignorance produces timidity. Martha was aware that she had neglected the general evidences by which the Christian religion commends itself to our judgment; and the suggestions of doubt were the more frequent and troublesome. Her memory, too, took the colour of her mind, and quickened into activity some commonplace objections of infidelity which had been uttered in her hearing at a considerable distance of time

for her annoyance, but which had been so dormant, that she scarcely thought they had a place in her recollection.

It was of vital importance to her peace of mind that from this subject at least all doubt should be excluded; and as it was simply a sincere and just decision on the weight of testimony supplied that was necessary, nothing seemed required except a clear and combined exhibition of those external evidences by which revelation has been sustained against all attack, and has gathered confidence from examination, while human creeds and carnal religions have perished by the very hands that wove them.

As far as conversation would admit, I touched on the leading and most tangible proofs which the subject affords, carefully dwelling on those which had most impressed my own mind. I then put into her hands successively, Doddridge's Sermons on the subject; Halyburton on Natural and Revealed Religion; Skelton on Deism; with two or three anonymous articles on the truth of Revelation, that her thoughts might continue some time in one line of reflection, and that the object to be contemplated might be studied in a variety of lights and aspects.

Martha was much interested in this intercourse. I did not expect her to be suddenly relieved; but her countenance was somewhat clearer, and her heart evidently lighter, than at the moment of our meeting. I had a stronger conviction than formerly, that an indulgence of excessive feeling was likely to be a snare to her; and indeed I could not avoid ascribing her present distress principally, if not entirely, to this undue sensibility, operated on by a growing perception of human frailty and sinfulness. It was a favourable opportunity, and I resolved to acquaint her with my impressions.

Martha had said she wished to know the worst of herself.

"The worst I know of you," I replied, "is, that you have too much feeling."

"O, brother, I wish it were!" she said, incredulously; "surely we cannot have too much feeling if it is right feeling."

"But, my dear, if right feeling, as you term it, is *excessive*, it becomes *wrong* feeling."

"But one cannot always govern one's feelings," she continued; "and is it not better to have sometimes an excess of feeling and suffer for it, than to sink into indifference and selfishness?"

"Yet why," I replied, "should you determine on choosing one of two extremes, when there is a middle path of safety and comfort open to us? I do not commend indifference; I do not blame sensibility; I condemn the *excess* of it.

"I beseech you," I continued, with greater earnestness, in these words, or words to this effect; "I beseech you, my dear, not to trifle with this evil. I consider it to be your natural infirmity; and if you nurture and indulge it, innocent as it appears in your eyes, it will be as a viper in your bosom. I cannot help ascribing all your present uneasiness and sorrow to this source—indeed I cannot!"

Martha heard a voice in these words which I could not hear; they sank into her heart, and she became thoughtful. I knew not that they bore so large an application as she was making; but I considered that her reflections, once fixed on the subject, would be of abundantly more advantage to her than any additional remarks I could offer. That her thoughts might not be prematurely disturbed, I left her to the meditations she evidently courted.

Martha's reflections were not those of an evening; they ran through several days and weeks of this period. All our conversations had been interesting to her; but her attention was especially arrested by the closing one, which, from her peculiar situation, fell like a sudden gleam of light, on a weakness of character which, until then, she had considered an excellence. She found it difficult to receive the unpleasant truth; and her pampered feelings had innumerable specious pleas to urge in their own favour. But Martha was always ingenuous with herself; and her indulgence passed into jealousy, her jealousy led to watchfulness, and her watchfulness

to detection. She saw how easily an ungoverned sensibility might mislead the judgment, betray the heart, and undo the character which, in all things else, may be truly admirable. More than this, she saw that a sensibility, refined and noble as it may appear, which is not under the rule and direction of high religious principle, is only another name for that gross selfishness which it professes to scorn and reprobate.

With this discovery arose a sense of duty. A disposition which was evil in itself and injurious in its consequences was not to be tolerated in a mind set against all known sin. Martha therefore declared hostility to it in all its excesses. But, on a review of her conduct, or rather want of conduct and activity in carrying out this resolution immediately, she was induced to fear she had mistaken a *declaration* of warfare for war itself.

However, the highest elevation is to be gained step by step. Martha had made one important step in detecting her weakness; another not less important in resolving to overcome it; the next step was to be taken unconsciously.

Few habits are more difficult of conquest than that of listless revery. Though contrary to her natural disposition, Martha had indulged in it so long as an opiate to her sorrows, that it nearly assumed the force of habit. This habit was to be imperceptibly weakened. The books I had put into her hand for perusal could only be read in the hours of retirement. As her progress would be the subject of inquiry, she was obliged to read them; and as their contents would be brought into conversation, she must give her best attention to them. These considerations, united with her sisterly affection and the weight of the questions to be discussed, brought her mind to the work.

The exercise, once begun, became easier and frequently pleasant. The authors she was daily consulting were treating the most serious subjects in the most serious manner; and gradually their spirit was diffused over hers. Her mind became calm and reflective. When not engaged in reading, she no longer resigned herself to

a wandering imagination ; but endeavoured so to engage her thoughts on the past as to become better acquainted with herself and the dangers of her situation.

The agitation of the passions affords a valuable opportunity for self-knowledge. The heart at ease, like a fountain at rest, appears pure, transparent, and lovely in reflecting the loveliness of heaven ; but let it be violently disturbed, and its turbid waters will throw up to our sight nothing but mire and dirt. Martha had now sufficient command of herself to dwell on the painful, but subsiding exercises of her mind, and they afforded her some new and deeper perceptions of her religious character. She saw much more of the natural unbelief, ingratitude, and selfishness of the heart than formerly. She saw how little submission she had to the will of God, when that submission was actually tried ; and how little reliance on the Divine goodness, when that goodness ceased to be apparent to the eye of flesh. Now that all this was so evident, she wondered that it had not been seen before. Her blindness and folly seemed equalled only by her other iniquities ; and her spirit sank into the nothingness of deep and genuine humility.

Meanwhile, the year waned away to its close. To Martha it brought, not only those impressions of which every reflective mind is conscious, but the sacred recollections of her covenant dedication at the termination of a former year. The period was sanctified to her profit. Her mind was touched by the frailty of life, and awed by the approach of eternity. She was reminded of all her follies and sins, and confessed them in all the tenderness of grief. As she sank in penitence she rose in confidence. She remembered the years of the Most High, and encouraged herself in her God. Her thoughts dwelt on the sacrifice and merit of her Saviour, with a most vivid sense of their unspeakable value ; and she once more gave herself up to Him whom she was bound to serve. Hope, like the bow of promise, gleamed on the darkness of the retiring storm, and told of brighter days to come.

The following extracts of this date may serve further to illustrate what she felt, and how she was rising above

her feelings; how she was abased under an increased conviction of her sinfulness, and possessed of higher sentiments of the Redeemer's excellence and grace.

—"I thought this letter would have been composed of the language of despair; but, through the rich mercy of God, Hope is again lifting up her head. O for a heart to love and praise Him, who has given us the valley of Achor for a door of hope!

—"I seem like the Israelites on their coming up from Egypt. If they looked behind them, there was Pharaoh with his host—if before them, there was the Red Sea; there was no way of deliverance. Instead of crying to the Lord, they began to murmur: but the Lord did not deal with them as they deserved; and I would hope he will not with me. O Lord, return, return, and take possession of our hearts, and enable us to live and die in thy service and to thy glory!

—"This morning my distracted mind was much supported by the sweet promise—'With every temptation He will make a way for our escape, that we may be *able to bear it.*' It was a beam of hope when my mind was sinking. I had before thought there was no passage in the Word of God exactly suited to my present state of trial.

—"What a sweet prayer is that of Peter's when ready to sink,—'Lord, save, or I perish!' I never saw so much beauty in it before! But when, in trying to avoid one danger, we find ourselves falling into another, it will make us cry *in earnest*, Lord, save, or we perish!—O to lie low, *very low*, at the feet of Jesus, *deeply* sensible of our own weakness!

—"When I look within, I find—what shall I say? Ingratitude is too cold a name for the baseness of our conduct towards God. I feel what I deserve; but this leads me to Calvary. There the mystery of the Divine forbearance is unveiled. Yes! God hears our Advocate on high, and will for ever hear. Herein is love!

'Not to be thought of but with tides of joy,
Not to be mentioned but with shouts of praise.'

—"My mind is dark and carnal. But what a mercy to have a desire (though a very faint one) for *complete* deliverance from sin!

—"My mind is, as usual, dark and indifferent. O that it were with me as in months that are past! Yet is not the winter necessary as well as the summer? But I am ready to say, it is winter all the year with me. O that spring-time and harvest may come to me! Hope beams while I am writing, and I am ready to affirm that the summer will return.

—"I feel not only lukewarm, cold, and indifferent, but full of rebellion, pride, perverseness, and ingratitude. I am weary of myself; but is it from hatred to sin, or the accusations of conscience? You are ready to say, is there *no* balm in Gilead? is there *no* physician there? Yes, there is! And if I did not hope that that balm would one day be applied to my heart, I should be *quite* in despair. But when I attempt to pray for it, a lethargy seems to hang on me and prevent me. I doubt not the willingness of Jesus to save, but I doubt my willingness to be saved in *his way*. O blessed Saviour, have mercy on a wretched sinner, who feels her weakness, but who is too proud to own it—who does not like to stoop to come to Thee, as possessing nothing but sin. Take away my pride, my selfishness, my sin!

—"I cannot help taking up my pen to invite you to praise the Lord with me and for me. I do hope the Lord is again reviving his work; but I rejoice with trembling, because of this body of sin and death. I have felt the perverseness of my will subdued; I have been enabled to bless God for my trials. I have had more pleasure in reading the Scriptures, and I hope more love to the Saviour. O the goodness of God! Will he yet be gracious? Will he again grant me the smiles of his countenance, after all my abuse of his mercies? O for deepest humility! O that redeeming love may henceforth be my theme!

CHAPTER VIII.

REVOLUTION. 1811.

THE mind is like the rocking-stone,—a baby-hand may set it in motion, but the might of the mightiest cannot readily bring it to rest. Martha's peaceful spirit had been agitated by what was in itself a trivial occurrence; yet the master-hand of religion was necessary to rectify the judgment and allay the perturbation of the passions. Even in the application of this power, *time* is generally to be brought into the account: for the passion will often remain in motion after the cause is removed, as the sea is seen to roll and break when the winds have ceased.

The sickness of Martha's distress had arisen from religious causes. She had lost all pleasure in those things which were so delightful. She had prayed without life, worshipped without composure. Her thoughts had been confused and distracted. Distraction had brought darkness, darkness had brought guilt, guilt had brought doubt. She had questioned her whole profession; and, in use her own words, had concluded that her iniquities had separated between her and her God. Under such impressions, she was not aware of the influence of any secondary sorrow: but no sooner were her fears appeased on this principal subject than her mind was alive to minor anxieties.

Her thoughts involuntarily reverted to those circumstances which had originated all her sorrows. Accustomed to run in this channel, they could not at once be completely diverted, and there were peculiarities in the case which invited them in this direction; particularly the continued representations of her friend at C—— had this tendency. She always touched on the subject, more or less, in her correspondence, and always

with the same confidence. She was sure that all was right—that a declaration would be made—and she assigned specious reasons for its delay, some of which, indeed, would have had considerable weight on the most impartial judgment.

It was impossible that her mind should remain uninfluenced by such assurances. Martha was desirous of believing them, not on her own account, but for the sake of another. She thought that she cared not for the result of the affair; she was only anxious that her opinion of the party should not be changed. In defiance, however, of her gentle and unsuspecting nature, that opinion was insensibly altering. If, indeed, any unwelcome suggestions arose to her mind, she would repress them, and exclaim, "It cannot be—it cannot be;" yet her thoughts shrunk from the confidence which these negatives implied; they hung in doubt—in doubt of the truth and honour of one whose conduct seemed to affect her estimate of human nature generally. "This suspense!" she would say—"this suspense—any thing is better than this suspense!"

These were only the occasional wanderings of a mind not as yet fully controlled. But Martha now possessed as clear a perception of her state as any one can pretend to, where the feelings have been at all engaged. She acknowledged to herself the weakness of her character, and pursued it in all its most dangerous tendencies. In the trial which still entangled her straying thoughts, she saw and felt distinctly what was to be done: that to banish suspense, she must destroy expectation; and that expectation was to be destroyed, not by balancing powerful reasons against the weaker, but by the exclusion of the subject altogether from thought. Religion, which had made her way plain before her face, gave her strength to enter on it, thorny and rough as it was to fleshly sensations.

The first step in this course led her to dispose of her C—— correspondence. She had valued it for its own sake, and it was difficult for her to abandon it, associated as it had been with many marks of Christian friendship.

But it had injured her, and it would still injure her. The very sense of her weakness was her strength; for it would not allow her, in this struggle, to leave any known advantage in the hands of her enemy. Her resolution was taken, painfully taken; and though not avowed, was soon accomplished. That correspondence quickly expires to which one of the parties becomes indifferent.

The next measure was strictly to forbid herself the perusal of any book which should have a tendency to feed those thoughts she was seeking to subdue. Happily, Martha did not see, in all its extent, the importance of this resolution; for she had no acquaintance with that class of books which abounds with an exuberant and vicious sentimentality. But she had found, in her present state of mind, works that were not only unexceptionable but truly excellent, dangerous to her. She considered her mind as diseased. What others might feed on with ease and advantage would do her an injury; and therefore it was her duty to abstain. In this conviction she experienced a jealousy towards all works of imagination, whether in prose or rhyme; and avoided every thing that might excite sensibilities already too quick and pungent.

Finally, as a means of peculiar value, she resolved on keeping her attention fully engaged and pre-occupied. She had already felt the efficacy of this remedy, and sensible benefit urged her to a complete and persevering trial. Her salutary purpose was confirmed by a sentence in the letters of Henry Kirke White. He expresses it as his conviction, "that a life of full and constant employment is the only safe or happy one." Martha had a strong sympathy with the character and sufferings of this young and amiable martyr to ambitious excitation; his opinion fastened on her memory, and frequently arose to her thoughts in the moment of need.

Let it not be supposed that this moment of need never came, or came but seldom—that having once taken her resolution, it was without difficulty fulfilled. No—it cost her many and sharp encounters with herself. While she kept to the *letter* of her purpose, the *spirit* was not

always attainable. If the hands were busily pressing the needle on its progress, the mind would wander from so mechanical a task. If she turned to the page of knowledge, it was often necessary to review, and review, the same few sentences she had read, to possess their meaning. If she thought, her thoughts would frequently make their way, by a most circuitous course, to the borders of forbidden ground; and her mutinous imagination would find resemblances in present objects to things that were to be forgotten, where really nothing but disparity existed.

Amid these discouragements, however, Martha remained steady to her purpose. Her mind was differently affected to what it had been in her former conflict. She was now satisfied that there was no collusion between her and her enemy. If she could not always forget, she always strove to forget. If she could not do all she desired, she desired to do all she ought. "To will was present with her;" and if she could not secure success, she was yet determined, in a strength above her own, to exercise resistance to the last. She had therefore for her companion an approving conscience, which shed joy and confidence on her spirit. She partook of the blessedness of the man who resisteth temptation—almost the exclusive blessedness of this frail state. For all are exposed to temptation; the only difference is between those who yield and those who resist. Martha was enabled to resist; and she found that there is unspeakably more gratification in conquest than in compliance.

But the body will sometimes sink under a conflict for which the mind is adequate. The complicated distress and depression of Martha's spirit, during several months, operating on a frame naturally delicate, had brought her health once more into a hazardous state. Medical advice was again sought, and again she was ordered into the country. At her especial desire, she was to go to Cheshunt; and arrangements were made for her and her young friend of that place to reside together.

Our parents allowed no great domestic event to transpire without an extraordinary act of domestic wor-

ship. As Martha's separation from her family was likely to be permanent, it would have been sufficient to authorize this service; but as their younger son was about to change his home for the business and temptation of the world, and as I was now looking to a settlement in some part of the church of God, the situation of the family appeared eminently eventful; and it excited a proportionate degree of parental anxiety.

This anxiety and care they sought, by prayer and supplication, to cast on Him who had so often shown that he cared for them. An evening was set apart for the solemn and delightful purpose. Doctor Winter, my mother's pastor, presided. He read and paraphrased the affecting passage which records Jacob's departure from his father's house. He presented a most earnest and appropriate prayer, acknowledging the mercies of the family, and particularly noticing the circumstances of each of its members. The service, in its own nature, was interesting; and there was an unction upon our worship. The heart seemed enlarged to pray, the lips to sing praise, and the thoughts to meditate. The feeling of one was the feeling of all; it was the communion of saints, the communion of heaven. Our parents wept from gratitude, anxiety, and love; and their children wept in sympathy with their sentiments. Those tears were among the happiest shed by mortals! Martha and I frequently alluded to the prayers and pleasures of that night; it was marked by one of those monumental pillars erected and ascribed to the Divine goodness, in the way of our pilgrimage, which it did the heart good to look back upon.

With the blessings of her family on her head, Martha went to Cheshunt, and took up her proposed residence with her friend. They were now alone, and had nothing to annoy their intercourse. The change was decidedly advantageous to my sister. She was not in solitude either by day or night; and this assisted her greatly in controlling her thoughts. Her friend, too, was as judicious as she was kind in her conduct. She diverted Martha's attention when it was sinking into herself;

soothed her spirit beneath the occasional weight of nervous depression, and engaged her mind by a variety of nameless light and pleasing female occupations. In every thing she watched over her peace of mind, and conversed freely on those religious topics which were most likely to promote it. These attentions were medicinal. They worked insensibly, but daily and effectually. Martha, who could not underrate an expression of kindness, often spoke of them as invaluable to her at this period.

According to her ability, and beyond her ability, Martha strove to make her daily walks walks of usefulness. She could not be happy in seeking her own benefit, unless it was connected with that of others. She reproached herself for having cooled in the works of benevolence, and anxiously sought to redeem the time. She introduced herself into the neighbouring cottages; and soon made friends to herself of the old and young. Many of the children she undertook to instruct; and pressed on the attention of the parents, in an easy and familiar way, the most important subjects of temporal and eternal interest. The sick of her own sex were objects of especial sympathy; and to all, and everywhere, she sought to distribute tracts, a favourite mode with her of endeavouring to do good. Much may be done by these means at a very small expense: but Martha cheerfully consecrated to them her entire pocket-money.

An undue ardour in accomplishing an important object will sometimes endanger it. Martha had so sedulously improved the advantages of her situation as almost to exclude herself from her beloved retirement. She was not aware that by violent restraints she might produce a revulsion of mind; that society might be rendered most wearisome, and retirement become an object of unappeasable solicitude.

Circumstances, however, supplied the place of experience. The season of the year advanced; her strength was considerably increased; and she felt herself able to go a sufficient distance from home to retrace those quiet

paths of which she had so pleasant a recollection. She thought that retirement in this mode, as it was most inviting, so it would be harmless. She had found that, in the presence of nature, she was "never less alone than when most alone;" her mind had objects to dwell upon; objects that could not injure it, and in which it delighted. She listened therefore to the yearnings of her spirit; and many a summer's evening she strolled away from human intercourse, to intercourse more safe and refined.

In communing with objects that led to reflection, it was not possible that her reflections should always preserve the character she desired. They would sometimes sink into gloom; sometimes start aside to interdicted things; but they were more commonly obedient to her will, and of a profitable tendency.

Martha looked on nature with an altered eye; but there was nothing in her aspect to offend the sight. Nature had heightened her gladness in her most happy days, and now she soothed a spirit struggling with its own weaknesses and the sufferings of this mortal state. Her very pensiveness of mind, far from being an impediment, gave her a deeper relish for her charms. Her pent sensibilities flowed strongly into this channel; the more they were indulged, the more they asked indulgence: till, in the idea of the exercise being safe and salutary, it was likely to become excessive, and therefore hurtful. How difficult is it to say how far the passions of the heart may go! How much more difficult, when they have reached the admitted boundary, to say—Thus far, but no farther!

Martha must be forgiven, if occasionally she lost all idea of hazard, in the fulness of enjoyments which were so congenial to her newly-awakened tastes, and so calculated to raise her above worldly sorrow, or soften down its rough realities. The cup of joy had been too much alienated from her lips, and she drank of it with proportionate eagerness. Nature, in the glowing splendours of morning; nature, in the solemn infinitude of night; nature, rocked by convulsive storms; nature, reposing on the bosom of silence; nature, shrouded in folded

clouds; nature, smiling under the blessed light of heaven; nature, in all the freshness, bloom, and beauty of youth; nature, dishevelled, decrepit, and dying with age; nature, in all her endless varieties of form, of colour, and of aspect, was still familiar, still delightful.

Martha at this period did not think of delineating her feelings. It was enough for her to see, to feel, and to enjoy. She did not deceive herself into enjoyment that she might *record* it, and record it that she might *exhibit* it. It was enough that she was happy; and if in this respect she could think herself happier than many, she considered herself, not the superior person, but the more privileged.

The following lines, therefore, were written at a later date; but as they are evidently recollections of pleasures very much associated with this time, they find their proper place in this chapter. As a preface to these, and any other verses that may follow in the progress of the narrative, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that they are by no means introduced to claim for the subject of this memoir "all sorts of talent." Many lives have been so written, as if, whatever excellence might be proved to belong to the individuals, all would be vain, unless it could be shown that they *made verses*; and such contemptible specimens have sometimes been brought as evidence on this important particular, that the eye can scarcely meet measured lines in such connection without ridicule.

In exposing myself to this danger, I have simply to state, that nothing of the kind is brought forward to prove that Martha had talent of any order or degree. It is brought forward, and with reluctance, to illustrate her *moral character*; and if the introduction of the pieces that appear were not thought necessary to the development of moral tastes and pleasures, they would certainly have been omitted, rather than risk a charge which in too many cases has been justly preferred.

Oft to these wond'ring eyes hast thou reveal'd
Such finish'd beauty, that, in rapture lost,
My soul has seem'd inebriate with joy.
O, I have gazed upon the dewy morn,
Distilling fragrance from each shrub and flower,
All various, all harmonious, till I felt
New life within!—Exulting, I have watch'd
The golden radiance of the setting sun
Tinging the meads with glory—striking deep
Into the thickest shade, until my heart
Has glow'd beneath its beams. And I have watch'd
The evening star rise slowly; trac'd its course,
And felt as if I follow'd in its train.
Nor yet unfrequent by the lake's cool brink
I've sat sequester'd, panting for that peace
Of which it seem'd the emblem. Nothing there
Incongruous seem'd: around, the waving trees
Reflected in the stream; the distant bells
Just heard at intervals; and then the hum
Of the lone beetle, or the plaintive note
Of some sad songstress, spoiled of her young.
In such a scene, so tranquil, so retired,
Scarce has the pulse of life appear'd to beat;
And e'en the clock oftimes has been so still,
As if it dare not vibrate. I have stood
Gazing on thee, sweet nature, till my soul
Has been uplifted with devoutest love
And holy admiration. I have long'd
For other powers to celebrate the praise
Of that infinite Wisdom, perfect Love,
And Pow'r omnipotent, which could devise,
Create, and then maintain the wondrous whole!
Thou dost proclaim His glory; yet art thou,
In all thy beauty, but the passing shade
Of that bright world where He himself resides!
Yet will I meditate upon thy charms—
With thee converse in all thy hidden grace.
Let me still see thy features, and direct
My heart beyond thyself, the fairest type,
To that celestial Eden, where my soul
Shall range at large, and see the great Supreme!

CHAPTER IX.

MENTAL IMPROVEMENT. 1812–14.

The wheel of Providence is constantly making its revolutions, and throwing up the most unexpected events. At the close of the year 1811, I accepted of a pastoral charge in London, and designed making a temporary residence with my parents. Martha could not allow herself to be out of the way. She forgot nature; contended that her health fully admitted of her return; flew to the arms of her friends; joined in the solemnities of ordination; and became an inhabitant with me of the same dwelling. Thus the arrangement for her at Cheshunt, which was considered permanent, was comparatively of slight continuance.

I remained with my sister in these circumstances upwards of two years. Instead of passing through this period week after week, or month after month, I shall endeavour to give a miniature sketch of the whole under a few leading particulars, not scrupling to carry an occasional remark into future life, if it will prevent the awkwardness of repetition. By this method I expect the reader will command a clearer and more compressed view of my sister's occupations and progress.

After our mutual rejoicings at being thus brought together, the first thing that occurred to us was, that a fine opportunity was furnished for superintending Martha's mental improvement. I soon found that the pupil had calculated upon this even more than her teacher, and I was prepared to enter on the pleasing task with greater alacrity. No instructer ever had a fairer field to cultivate. There were no perversities of will, no vexations of temper, to contend with; and her powers of mind, without being extraordinary, were good. The soil

needed the hand of cultivation, and it would reward it bountifully.

As in husbandry the ruling principle is to adapt the seed to the soil, so in education the great secret is to accommodate the lessons to the dispositions and capacities of the pupil. Education cannot be carried to a successful issue but as this principle is recognised and respected. If two young persons, the one with a searching understanding but dormant invention, the other with a luxuriant imagination but feeble judgment, are submitted to exactly the same process of education, it is obvious that, whichever plan be adopted, it will, in *one case*, be rather an injury than a boon. The elements of knowledge may be given to two, to twenty, or, such are our mechanical improvements, to hundreds in class; but *education*, in the complete sense of the term—that education which consists in forming right principles, just tastes, and benevolent dispositions—can only be given by bringing the person taught into immediate and familiar contact with a teacher who has a penetrating eye to seize on the points of natural character, and a steady hand to prune what is excessive, and to nurse and strengthen what is feeble.

Into these simple views Martha was fully prepared to enter. She was just as ready to admit the weak parts of her character, and most desirous of adding to the means already used to fortify them. The object, of course, was to exercise, expand, and invigorate her mental powers, as distinguished from the affections of the heart. To accomplish this, it did not appear desirable or necessary to bind down her attention to a dry and abstruse study which should answer this end *only;* it was rather wished to keep the mind actively engaged on those subjects which, apart from the *discipline* they brought with them, would be useful to her in future life. The plan, therefore, was of the most simple character.

We began at the beginning. As an introduction, Martha read Watts's Improvement of the Mind twice over; and, as a text-book for her future studies, she made herself familiar with the contents and arrangement of

Millard's Cyclopædia, with slight variations. She then went through Murray's Grammar, for which an abridgment had already prepared her, not merely committing its rules to memory, but understanding and applying them. With the grammar we united geography; the outline was supplied by Turner and Goldsmith, the detail by Pinkerton.

When these were made easy, she proceeded to history, and read Prideaux' Connection of Sacred and Profane History; Rollin's Ancient History; selections from The Ancient Universal History on the Jewish, Grecian, and Roman Empires; accompanied with an Abridgment of Spence's Polymetis, and the occasional use of Bryant's Mythology. On modern history she studied Goldsmith's Abridgment of the History of England, with large selections from Rapin; Adolphus's History of the Reign of George III.; Custance's Constitution of England; Robertson's History of Charles the Fifth; Russell's Modern Europe; with references to the Modern Universal History, and some historical articles in the Encyclopædia.

With history we soon associated natural philosophy. On this subject she studied Adams's Lectures, Rowning's Natural Philosophy, Parke's Chymical Catechism, and some articles in the Encyclopædia. To natural philosophy we attached natural history, and made use of an abridgment of Buffon in three volumes, with Durham's Physico and Astro-Theology.

To these succeeded philosophy, properly so called. The authors studied were, Enfield's History of Philosophy; Locke on the Understanding; Reid's Essays; Stewart's Philosophy of the Human Mind; Watts's Logic, &c.

In directing Martha's course of self-instruction, it was not designed to bring down her sensibilities to the present tone of her mind, but to raise her mind to a decided preeminence over her feelings; and while her thoughts, her judgment, and her memory were kept in exercise with evident advantage, there did not appear to be danger in cultivating those tastes which feed on whatever is beautiful or sublime in the works of man and of God. If, in

the act of cultivation, those tastes should be strengthened, they would also be corrected, and would become more safe by being more discriminative. I fear, indeed, I must not say that inclination gave no additional weight to this argument; for I could not willingly see her excluded from a world of rich and pure enjoyment. The effort was not to expel her from her paradise, but to extract the sting of that serpent which made it hazardous to dwell there.

Connected, therefore, with the course already specified, Martha read Burke on the Sublime, Alison on Taste, Kaim's Elements, and Blair's Lectures, united with the unexceptionable productions of some of our best poets, the Essays of the Spectator, Rambler, and Idler, and a select few of that very small class of prose fictions which have a tendency, in the most attractive manner, to expose the fallacies of passion, to brace the mind to firmness and perseverance, and to acquaint us with the ensnarements and unhappiness of a most alluring world.

It cannot be supposed that in these pursuits *religion* was forgotten. When Martha had made herself mistress of those religious treatises named in a former chapter, she continued her studies through this period by reading successively, but perhaps not exactly in the following order: Paley's Natural Theology, and Moral and Political Philosophy; Butler's Analogy; Beattie on Truth; Gregory's Evidences; Gisborne's Duties of Men and Women; with some of the most valuable pieces of Witsius, Owen, Baxter, Watts, and Edwards. To these should be added, apart from the miscellaneous books of the day, by some of which she was much edified, Mosheim's Ecclesiastic History, and many volumes of religious Biography, a line of reading in which she found great pleasure.*

It is not to be concluded that Martha always brought

* Martha's course of reading is here traced, because the writer knows the youthful and inquiring eye will pass over it with gratification; but, at the same time, he does not wish it to be considered altogether unexceptionable. Some books may not stand where he should now place them. Some works that are not named would be introduced; and a few of those which are named require to be read with caution, and praised with qualification.

to these pursuits the same temper of mind. Sometimes, with an unexplored library before her, she would be tempted in her eagerness to drink down all knowledge at once, to run promiscuously from book to book, without acquainting herself with any one of them. It was then necessary to remind her that a superficial acquaintance with books is not knowledge; that there is no path to knowledge but that of patient industry. Frequently I repeated to her the maxim of Locke—that to learn much we must learn a little at a time, and learn it well; and as often the maxim of Lord Burleigh—that to do any thing well, we must do one thing at a time.

Occasionally, this ardour would subside into discouragement. The new world opened to her sight was so spacious and unwieldy that she should never be able to traverse it—so much was to be done, it was in vain to attempt any thing; and she was sometimes in danger, from the conviction that she had too much to do, of really doing nothing. Generally, one kind word from her teacher would dissipate this depression; and her mind was fortified against its return by making her sensible of her progress, and by assurances that, however small it may at first appear, it would be effectual if continued; that the world before her, like the material one we inhabit, was to be compassed by resolute perseverance, in adding one poor short step to another; and that those who had explored the most of it were at least as remarkable for their irrepressible activity as for their native genius.

It might sometimes occur that Martha's attention would linger so long on a work which filled her imagination and interested her feelings, as to consume the time allotted to some drier study; but it admitted of an easy remedy. There was a tacit acknowledgment between us of Martha's deficiencies, and of the adaptation of her present pursuits to overcome them; and an exchange of looks was always sufficient to correct the irregularity. Her expression was that of gentle affection, and seemed to say, "Yes, brother, I thank you—I have been foolish, but I will avoid it in future."

These, however, were only exceptions from a general rule. Martha, on the whole, gave herself to these pursuits with an energy which surprised and delighted me; and which would have afforded greater surprise, had I then known how powerful an exercise of self-denial it involved. Her diligence was even greater than I was aware. Since her papers have fallen into my hands, I have met with several abridgments of books she perused beyond what I knew to exist, and which evince as much skill in the selections as industry in the performance. They are now sad memorials of a hand that slumbers in dust.

Altogether, these exercises were highly beneficial. They occupied her thoughts and fed her understanding. They refined her tastes, and gave her confidence in her own judgment. They raised the tone of her conversation, and spread abroad the concealed excellences of her character. They multiplied her sources of gratification, and taught her to partake of them without injury—with abundant advantage. Her profiting, which appeared to all, became, in some degree, sensible to herself. She always referred to these studies as, considering all the circumstances, fraught with singular and indefinite importance.

Lest it should be supposed that Martha necessarily gave all her time to these attainments, I subjoin a table for the allotment of her hours at this period, which I have found in her memoranda. It will show how much may be done by a regular appropriation of a comparatively small portion of time to our object, and that Martha was conscientiously concerned to have all her time rightly occupied. It of course applies only to the time spent at home—we shall have occasion to see how it was devoted when abroad:—

"REDEEMING THE TIME.

Rise at six, when my health allows.
Read till family prayer.
Breakfast, eight o'clock.
Retire for private devotion.

Read a hymn and Scriptures in order.
Go to market.
Attend to domestic concerns, and work till twelve.
Read till one.
Work till two.
Dress—Dinner—Read till four.
Tea.
Read and work till eight.
Devotion.
Supper.
Family prayer.
Work and converse till retire."

I find, in the same connection, the following notices; and as they are congenial with the subject of this chapter, I introduce them:—

"Dr. Hartley advises his sister to seek cheerfulness in constant employment. Let me remember this.

"In the company of my superiors let me be generally silent, and ready to receive instruction, that I may be able to impart knowledge to my equals.

"Is my mind inactive? Let me read the lives of eminent young persons—mark their attainments in piety and knowledge—Blush!—And let not another day of my life pass away without having done something towards the cultivation of my understanding.—Am I disposed to be vain of a little knowledge? Let me go to the same school, and there learn that I know nothing, and that in proportion as I know any thing as I ought to know it, I shall be humble."

CHAPTER X.

DOMESTIC CHARACTER. 1812–13.

THE proper sphere of woman is so strongly delineated by a Divine finger, that it must be apparent to every eye which is not wilfully blind. Those who question or deny it start aside from their orbit, and by their irregularities give and receive a disastrous influence; while those who contentedly move in the circle assigned them, not only fulfil the pleasure of their Creator, but, in silence and without observation, like the moon in heaven, are shedding around them a refreshing sympathy that shall gladden many a heart, and a gentle light that shall guide and confirm many a hesitating footstep.

Martha, on her return home, had the domestic management of the household put entirely into her hands. This arrangement was made very much at my solicitation, as I was unwilling that her attention should be engrossed by mental pursuits, and very desirous that she should be trained to the exercise of those domestic virtues which are indispensable to the excellence of female character. Hitherto her thoughts had not been occupied in this direction; I had sometimes concluded that she was indifferent to the "study of household good;" and it was with some anxiety that I paused to observe how she would occupy an untried situation.

It was with proportionate satisfaction I saw her enter on the proposed duties with the greatest readiness of mind. Her attention, I found, had been lately brought to the subject of domestic economy, as a study of high importance to young females, by some admirable observations from the pen of Mrs. More; and now that the subject was fairly under her notice, her good sense at once suggested what was due to it, and what due to

herself. She was moreover influenced, as I afterward learned, by the resolution she had formed of keeping herself fully employed. A *change* of engagement was necessary to accomplish this purpose, as the mind cannot dwell continuously and always on the same object.

Having accepted of her new duties, Martha did not choose to meet them with petty expedients, planless bustle, and culpable ignorance. She had too much spirit to give occasion to those who were to obey her orders for questioning her competency to command; and too much conscience to permit herself to be a party in transactions, while her ignorance prevented her deciding on their equity or injustice. She determined to acquaint herself with whatever it was proper for her to know. She therefore thankfully received the lessons of experience which a kind parent could supply; carefully minuted any valuable hints which she could otherwise obtain; and as carefully read over a few select treatises on the subject, which might enlarge or confirm her information.

Martha's first concern was, to lay down a plan of expenditure adapted to her means, that she might not be embarrassed in the appropriation of her money. To accomplish this, she entered into calculations of the average expenses for the week, month, and quarter, taking care to keep within the line of possibility. She knew, therefore, how the expenses of a week would affect those of the year; and was not liable to be surprised, at the end of a considerable period, into arrears for which she had failed to provide.

Martha soon found that arithmetic is the handmaid of economy, and resolved to improve herself in this neglected branch of female education. Her daily duties insensibly assisted her in effecting this resolution. She kept a correct journal of her current expenses, preserved in order her bills of charges, and was prompt and punctual in settling with her tradesmen, that they might never be tempted to seek illegitimate profits. She took much pains to acquaint herself with the real value of things; and as a great means of realizing the object, she generally made her own purchases. It was a practice with her,

not of option, but of uniform obligation, to satisfy herself of the quality and quantity of articles delivered before they were used; that what was an affair of *business* might never become one of frequent and unwholesome suspicion.

It was soon ascertained by Martha that comfort is not proportioned to expense; and, indeed, that often no two things are farther apart. Here then was room for skill and taste to operate; and so successfully were they employed, that I believe few young persons, with an equal cost, could have prepared a table of such pleasing and simple combinations, or could have given to a family habitation more of the air of comfort.

The detail of domestic service was made easy by being reduced to *order*. Every thing had its place; every event had its time; and each servant had her respective duties. Hurry was avoided by avoiding delay; confusion was prevented by observing rule. Something was always done, and with so little inconvenience that one wondered when it was accomplished.

Martha endeavoured to support her authority with her servants by reason and justice. She knew what could be done, and how it was to be effected. She did not, therefore, make impracticable demands; and she was aware when to praise and when to blame. She never allowed herself to be governed in her conduct towards them by humour or caprice. They could calculate on her approval or disapprobation before it was expressed. It was never in their power to say, "My mistress is out of humour, and do what I will, I cannot please her;" a declaration which, if made with truth, will sap the basis of all authority.

If Martha, at this early age, scrupled to assert her authority in all its naked strictness, she more than supplied the deficiency by her steady conciliating kindness. With her servants she was not familiar, she was not distant, but uniformly discovered, without effort, a concern in their welfare. She read to them; she conversed with them; she assisted them in getting up any articles of apparel; she noticed any slight indisposition with sym-

pathy; and gave many spontaneous proofs, such as a kind heart will often suggest, of her regard to their comfort. Her interest in their welfare inspired them with a desire to please her; and the desire to please made even drudgery a lightsome burthen. She taught them to love her, and this taught them to love their duty.

In her utmost frugality there was not a particle of niggardliness. Her economy was exercised on things rather than persons; and she would go as far as fidelity to her trust would allow, in subduing ill-will and unthankfulness. She never grudged what was *necessary*, because she never permitted what was superfluous. Every thing was done "without envyings and without ostentation." She took a share cheerfully in entertaining visiters to the family; and her whole manner, rather than any set words, expressed "a kindly welcome," which put the heart at rest in her society.

Every important attainment is made progressively. It is scarcely necessary, therefore, to remark, that Martha did not make herself mistress of her arrangements by any sudden effort, or that she had in her progress to contend with numerous difficulties. Domestic comfort, more than any thing besides, springs from the happy organization of a surprising multitude of small parts. In a machine of so many and such minute divisions, something will get wrong, and will threaten to interrupt the movement of the whole. Martha was made fully sensible of this; and observed upon it, with a truth which the best read in human nature will confirm, "That a number of small vexations always occurring are more trying to the temper and resolution than one serious calamity."

In harmony with this just remark, I cannot avoid uttering a conviction, that those females who shun and dislike the duties of domestic life as *below* them, would really find, on candid inquiry, that they are *far above them;* that they have not a mind strong enough, or motives pure enough, to discharge them. The detail must be seen; but if it is exclusively seen, it will appear trivial, perhaps revolting; there must be mind enough to comprehend the *total*, and to perceive how it bears on human

life and happiness. There must be a perseverance that will steadily travel to this result, and a patience that will endure the numerous petty interruptions to its progression.

Exalted *motive* is equally necessary to these duties. In the retirement of home there is nothing to feed vanity, and but little aliment for selfishness. The theatre is too small for display, and the spectators are too homely to afford excitation. There is much to be done that is not seen; and a thousand little provocations to be borne without sympathy, as they are too trifling to be repeated. Ife very thing moves well, it is perhaps without observation; if any thing fails, it is sure to be discovered: as a watch may go correctly the whole day unnoticed, but should it stop for five minutes it will certainly be detected. It is evident, that a person who meets such engagements as these with no higher motives than vanity and self-love will disregard and despise them. She will neither be happy nor bestow happiness. She may, by necessity, remain in the centre of her family, but her mind will be "not at home." She will be sighing and vapouring for some other pursuits, either worldly or religious, in which she can do something that shall be applauded, and can receive her applause from a larger circle of admirers.

If Martha's spirits were ever in danger of yielding to the discouragements of her domestic employ, she was supplied with an effectual remedy in her *benevolence*. She was not thinking of herself, but of others; and if occasionally her strength was exhausted, her mind chafed, and care was creeping over her countenance, she would instantly become herself again, under the cordial conviction that she was promoting the comfort of those dearest to her. Their acknowledgment was an ample reward for her largest exertions. How often have I seen her features brightened with heartfelt joy on receiving the caress of the father, the kind word of the mother, the approving glance of the brother, which expressed gratification in her attentions!

We are often more impressed by the *manner* of doing a

thing than by the act itself; and after all that has been stated, it was rather by Martha's manner than her services that her family were delighted. She did not "do her best," and then carelessly wait for its effect. She did not spread her table, and then depress its attendants with a saddened aspect and ill-humoured complaint. She considered the hour of meals as the hour of recreation; and she was anxious to connect with it higher gratification than the animal palate can partake. She looked to it as a season of pleasure, and she therefore met it with smiles. There was an interest and earnestness in her manner which gave a charm to the simplest food and the slightest attention. Nature had not, perhaps, given her that quick observation of trifling circumstances on which so much of domestic urbanity and comfort depend; but benevolence more than supplied the deficiency; for love has a superior sight to sagacity. Her affectionate eye would run in a moment over the well-known features of her family, and catch as quickly their several expressions. An unerring sympathy would prompt her deportment. It would tell her when to speak, when to be silent. It suggested what attentions would be acceptable, and what oppressive. It would dwell on her countenance with most fascinating power; and would not fail to bring its object under its genial influence. Few, very few knew so well how to heighten joy, or diminish grief; or have had such benevolent pleasure in reducing their knowledge to practice. It was difficult, if not impossible, to remain sad in her presence. The thought of her, in the mind of her family, was identified with cheerfulness; and I have often marked with surprise how her influence would insensibly chase away anxiety and fatigue from the countenance, as the morning mist is dissipated by the smiling and gentle approach of the blessed light.

But the most pleasing recollections I have of this period are connected with the winter's evening. Many a time, when the course of daily duty has been run, when the world, with its noise and turmoil, has been shut out, when the frugal repast has been shared, has Martha

wheeled back the table and pressed us to form our chairs round the lively fire which she always took care to provide for us. This was her opportunity. In this magic circle there was no resisting her influence. She had often tried it, and as often found it successful. Frequently, in the consciousness of her power, as we settled down snugly in our seats, she would say, "There, now we are happy;" assured that if we were not already so, we were in the way to be so. And if she could once see her assertion confirmed by her winning kindness, she herself was more than happy—happy in bestowing, happy in receiving.

Conversation usually began with her, and always in the most easy, generally in the most playful manner. When she had won attention, she had some anecdote to narrate, or some striking portion from an author to read, or some question to start, which had occurred to her in her day's pursuits. Frequently she would report to me her progress in the books she was studying; and this would often lead to discussions on their style or their subject. Whether these discussions were serious or sportive, she was always intent on making them interesting to her parents; and wherever the conversations commenced, they commonly ended in religion, an element in which we were all peculiarly at home.

If religion became the theme, it was not because the tone of conversation was sinking, but because it was rising above ordinary things. Religion did not depress our cheerfulness, it refined it. How often has the hour of "sweet domestic converse" been imperceptibly prolonged when this has been our subject! How often has it been dwelt upon, till life's tumult was forgotten, or heard only murmuring in the distance; till, alive to our present state of pilgrimage, we greeted each other as citizens of a better country; till our hopes blended with our meditations, and our meditations were lost amid the harps, the joys, the society of that blessed world!

Then followed the evening hymn and the apostolic prayer—and the unanimous, fervent Amen. Then came the parting words, the kind wishes. Martha's heart

always overflowed with them. The softness of her voice, the beaming of her eye, the gladness of her smile, the happiness of those hours, they are with me still—they will never depart!

The feeling attached to these enjoyments, and the value set upon those domestic attentions which have been briefly illustrated in this chapter, may, by those occupying the earlier period of youth, be considered somewhat overcharged. This however is not the *season* in which they are generally secure of a just estimate. In the first heyday of youth, when the heart is hurried with the anticipation of novel enjoyment, when the illusions of hope rest on every object, and promise a day without clouds, a life without fear, and pleasures without end, happiness cannot be recognised in the simple guise, the retiring habits, and quiet tenour of domestic life. It is only as these spells are broken by the rod of experience, as disappointment treads in the footsteps of hope, as vexation mingles with pleasure, as the bleak winds of worldly adversity chill and depress the undue ardour of the spirit, that it is disposed to return to those humble scenes which it had scorned. *Then* home is charming; and the tongue that knows no guile, and the heart that yearns with sympathy, and the thousand attentions and thousand decencies which flow through domestic life, all unpretending as they are, are sure to be rightly appreciated. Happy is he who, in such a state of mind, can still find in the mother, the wife, the sister, these real consolations! thrice happy he who, early taught to form a just estimate of happiness, has *always* drunk of these peaceful waters, and has only found their sweetness increased by the bitter draughts which a vain and insincere world has forced upon him!

CHAPTER XI.

DEVOTEDNESS. 1812–13.

No sooner had I accepted of a charge in London, than Martha determined on uniting herself to it; and on the 3d of January, 1812, she was admitted into my fold, and I became her pastor. The solemnity of the act, and the period of the year, caused her mind to revert, with peculiar seriousness, to her former exercises of dedication; and giving herself again to the Lord, she gave herself to his people, desirous of continuing in the apostle's doctrine, in breaking of bread, in fellowship, and in prayers.

Martha regarded this sacred connection, as not merely bestowing privileges, but as imposing obligations. She thought of herself as of the least of all saints; yet she considered that the least and the poorest was possessed of some one talent; and that there was the same proportionate responsibility resting on the application of one talent as of many. She was aware too that her situation brought with it peculiar claims. She was not only a voluntary member of a Christian church, which had a right to demand of each member a devotedness to the common prosperity; she was the relative of its minister; and if she was previously intrusted with the talents of example and influence, she felt that they were now increased in their weight and value tenfold. She had been faithful over a few things; Providence now committed to her many; and it was her anxious desire so to keep and employ them as in the sight of her helper and her judge.

The instruction of the young first engaged Martha's attention; that labour of love in which she had always delighted. I was at this time organizing the Sabbath-

school, and she became a most valuable assistant. She conferred with me on the arrangement of the female department; awakened feeling towards the object as one of eminent importance; and proposed herself as a teacher. Her example was quickly emulated; and she became the centre of an excellent band of serious young persons, who were ready to communicate what they had freely received.

Not so much from the whispers of prudence as from her characteristic humility, Martha resolved on taking the *youngest* class. To the interests of this class she cheerfully devoted herself. She kept a list of the children who composed it, with their addresses; and if any of them were absent without reason, she visited them. She carefully put down any simple questions or remarks which occurred to her, as suited to the capacity of her little charge; and she made a selection of tracts and books for their perusal in the intervals of the Sabbath, which were lent to the children as rewards for attention and industry. In adopting such rewards, her eye was directed to the improvement of the parent through the child; and that she might be satisfied the means were adapted to the end, it was an established rule with her not to lend any book which she had not read, and could not fully approve.

Martha was uniformly desirous, in these exercises, of preserving on her own mind, and of infusing into the minds of her children, the *spirit* of the day. She thought she had seen the Sabbath profaned, by giving too much of a secular character to the instructions and manœuvrings of the school. She governed her conduct by the *necessity* of the case. It was necessary that a child should read, that it might become acquainted with the Scriptures; and to read, it was needful to spell. To these, therefore, she confined herself; and if more, belonging to the elements of general education, was to be taught, it must be on a day, and with associations, less sacred. Over those common lessons which conscience approved, Martha sought to spread a religious character. It never appeared to herself or her children that the

principal end of their meeting was to read, or to spell, or to repeat: the acknowledged end which was pressed on the attention of the youngest was, to become acquainted with the Holy Scriptures; to keep holy, by the service of the school, and the worship of the sanctuary, the Sabbath-day; and to anticipate, by prayer and hope, that better and happier life of which the Sabbath was both the emblem and the pledge. It has been for the want of such serious views that many a child has learned to undervalue the Sabbath, in the very bosom of a Sunday-school; and that many a teacher has lost that sanctity of feeling which once put him at a distance from worldly and daily pursuits.

To the eye of a visiter Martha would seem to have been benefiting twelve or twenty poor children. This would more than have satisfied her for her exertions; but in reality she was blessing ten times that number. Her spirit diffused itself through the room. Her young companions in the good work copied her plans, and followed in her track. They would not be late when she was punctual to the minute; they would not be harsh when her manners were so affectionate; they would not be dilatory while they were admonished by her persevering assiduities. Such was the efficacy of her gentle influence that they all speedily became as one hand and one heart. The school became conspicuous for its order and improvement; and it yielded those rich and pleasant fruits which, as a method of instructing the poor of the land, it is adapted to produce beyond any other imagined plan.

There are, undoubtedly, existing plans which have more of ostentation and of promise about them; and it is well if we are not dazzled by them. The trained and officer-like master, who marshals his five hundred children with a word, or, if he please, with a nod, is a much more imposing figure than the humble Sabbath-school teacher, almost concealed in the midst of the dozen children which he is endeavouring to instruct; yet, on a close comparison, he may appear in better circumstances to answer the great purposes of education. In both

cases a competent portion of knowledge may be given; but knowledge, although it is power, is a power in itself of dubious character. It may explode the whole fabric of civilized society; or it may consolidate, and heighten, and beautify it. To be a power as *safe* as it is great, it must be combined with *principle*. He who is the sole instructer of multitudes cannot hope, should he desire it, to effect this combination; while he who, in the centre of a few, with a serious mind, seeks to familiarize moral and religious truth to the consciences of his pupils, is making knowledge, valuable as it is, a secondary and subordinate thing to what is infinitely more valuable.

The field of benevolence enlarges as we advance upon it. Martha soon perceived that the labours of the Sabbath might be extended with advantage in some portion of the week. She therefore originated a working-school, which met on one afternoon in the week; and was to be composed of the poorer and elder children, as a reward for their regularity and attention. The design was, to employ them in making simple articles of dress, some of which they were to enjoy, and the remainder were to be given to the poor. While their fingers were thus engaged, an instructive book was read, or a conversation started, which had a tendency to illustrate some duty of domestic life, or impress on the mind the importance of the life to come. The children discovered their relish for this exercise by a most punctual and eager attendance; and the congregation so fully sympathized in the plan, that neither money nor materials were even wanting; and, in the end, all the children composing this school appeared in a uniform exterior dress, the mixed fruit of their industry and Christian kindness.

This labour of love operated admirably beyond expectation. The working-school became a sort of honorary and beneficial appointment, to which the other children were aspiring by exertion and good behaviour; while the senior children, who from time to time composed it, were brought into closer and more endearing contact with

their steadiest and kindest instructers. It was this intimate and personal intercourse which Martha always valued so greatly, as a means of promoting the ends of moral and religious education; and she was affectionately concerned to make the very best use of it. Frequently she would talk apart with the children on their respective failings or duties; many of them she encouraged to write to her, that their minds might be improved, and that she might have an opportunity of imparting the most important lessons in a less perishable form; and most of them, in turn, were trained to the work of benevolence by attending her to the habitations of sickness or of poverty.

It was delightful to see her, when the duties of the school were closed, going forth with one or two of her pupils, like an angel of mercy, in search of wretchedness, which she might remove or mitigate. Her children always bore some article of clothing which their own hands had formed, and which their own hands were to bestow, that the difficult lessons of charity might be nourished by sympathy and established by habit. Happy was she if, in thus relieving existing distress, she could see the first young tear of generous compassion glisten in the eye which had never before dwelt on want or sorrow in which it was not concerned. And this happiness was often hers. Many a time to me has she spoken of these instances of kindly sensibility with correspondent feeling; and now her scholars, some of whom have risen to maturity, and are walking in the truth, speak of these visits as making, more than any thing, a deep and favourable impression on their hearts.

The circle of her charitable ministrations still expanded. Her connection with the Sabbath-school necessarily brought to her knowledge much of poverty and sickness; and her connection with me and the congregation, which, from being greatly identified with the port of London, is subject to trying and sudden reverses, gave her the opportunity of becoming acquainted with a yet greater proportion. The opportunity was well and

gratefully employed. She was eager in ascertaining the existence of distress, and as forward in concerting measures for its relief.

The will is every thing. Martha had rather a fixed devotedness to the work of charity than ample means for its promotion; but it is surprising what this accomplished. It gave her energy to strike upon a multitude of devices for advancing the ease, comfort, and friendships of the poor, the sick, and the dying, which would not have occurred to any mind little affected by the object; and it supplied her with confidence in drawing upon the resources of others to assist her in their execution. Frequently, when I have seen her involved in these services, or exhausted by them, I have been disposed to say, "How much can be done if we have the will to do it! How much is to be done without money, or at small expense! How little do they do who merely give *money!* Theirs is only a *fine* to the undeniable claims of charity —hers is the '*labour of love.*'" The example that is insensibly exciting such reflections as these is as great a blessing to those who behold it as to those who are the direct objects of its compassionate exertions.

These solitary visits to the habitations of mourning were decidedly her favourites. She met with her own sex, met with them alone, met with them in the season of helplessness, of want, perhaps of desertion. There was no eye from which modesty might teach her to shrink; no restraint thrown on her intercourse; no fear of having occupied ground which others might possess to more advantage; nothing to feed vanity, to produce observation, or create embarrassment. She felt herself at liberty to confer with the individual as a fellow-pilgrim through the wilderness of this life to another; as subject to the same fears and foes, the same wants and weaknesses, the same hopes and destinies. She entered entirely by sympathy into the state of the sufferer; and all her sensibilities were alive to do, to say something that might lighten the burthens she had to bear, or smooth the path she had to tread, or brighten those coming scenes

which, to most of our race, are overhung with ominous and impenetrable gloom.

Even the act of blessing has its disappointments. Martha did not find all her efforts for the poor and afflicted successful. Some were indifferent; some were ungrateful; some were promising as the morning dew, but as deceitful too. These dispositions would distress her, but they never impeded her in her ardent course of benevolence. Neither gratitude nor success was the standard of her duty. She had learned of Him who is kind to the evil and unthankful as well as the good and gentle. Unworthiness did not kindle her into anger; it melted her to pity. She looked on the subject of it as the more miserably diseased; and was under the greater concern to apply those remedies which alone can rectify the perverse mind, and heal the depraved heart.

These instances, however, were exceptions from a general rule. Martha confidently relied on Him who has said, our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, and the average of her success was beyond her expectations. Many a stubborn mind was softened by her kindliness, and many an ignorant one enlightened by her teachings. The withered heart was revived by the unction of her sympathy, and the deserted spirit comforted by the possession of her friendship. The orphan would clap his little hands for very gladness at sight of her; the widow's lorn heart would sing for joy at her coming, and the blessing of those who were ready to perish came upon her. I am happy that my memory supplies me with one or two illustrations of the good which she did, and the gratitude with which it was received.

Among the many persons visited by my sister was an aged female, who had seen better days. She was now the inhabitant of a garret. She had survived her relatives and connections, and was confined to her bed by a chronic disease, which required attentions she could neither find in friendship nor afford to obtain from hired hands. Happily, for many years she had lived under the influence of religious sentiment, and it furnished her

with her only consolation. But she was of a social nature, and had much delighted in the exercises of public worship; and now she was not merely deprived of these privileges, her very hold on the notice and regard of humanity seemed feeble and precarious. Day after day passed over her, with scarcely any interruption to her solitude. The idea of her loneliness preyed upon her: she might want, and languish, and die alone! Her spirit yearned for some kind hand to help her, some Christian voice to cheer.

What she desired she found in Martha, and was satisfied. She was visited once, and commonly twice, in the week, during the short residue of her life. Attentions were paid to her bodily comfort; and her mind was relieved by expressing itself to a friend on those hopes to which it was so earnestly clinging. Martha soon formed a strong affection for this excellent person. Her contentment in penury, her patience in tribulation, her serene confidence in the prospect of death, were lessons which she valued, and which she was anxious to lay to heart. Her visits became quite a thing of anticipation; and while conferring an invaluable good on the last days of an aged pilgrim, she felt herself to be rather receiving than bestowing benefit.

I had heard so much of this good lady that I determined to visit her. I found her in a low, arched room, containing but few articles of furniture, which had nothing to commend them, except that they were clean and in their places. She herself was sitting on the skeleton of a bedstead, supported by pillows. She was evidently eighty years of age or upwards. Time had traced many a wrinkle on her countenance; but there was an expression of intelligence and good-nature shed over them. Her eye asked my name or my errand.

"My name," I said, "is Reed."

"What, sir!" she exclaimed, with a countenance glowing into pleasure, "do you belong to Miss Reed?"

"Yes," I replied, glad to claim relationship with a name which excited such emotions, and amused at the

quaintness of the expression, "I do belong to Miss Reed."

"Sit down, sir—please to sit down." I took my seat beside her.

She was too happy for the moment to speak. "You seem," said I, willing to prolong conversation on a name so dear to us both, "very partial to Miss Reed."

"I have reason to be, sir—I have reason. I was so lonely—I was, as David says, like a sparrow on the house-top; and it was fearful to think of having no one to care for one, let what would happen. But Providence sent Miss Reed to me, and she brought other friends; and she is so kind and so considerate, you know, sir. Now I want for nothing; I have, as St. Paul says, all, and abound, sir."

"Want for nothing!" I thought to myself. "Here is an individual who has outlived her husband, her children, her friends; who is feeble with age, and uneasy with pain; whose pain and weakness are the harbingers of a dissolution which cannot be long postponed; who has sunk from better circumstances to humblest poverty; whose whole property would not provide her body with a decent passage to the grave; who says she wants for nothing! This is indeed religion!"

I looked on her with livelier interest. The happy contentment of her features confirmed the expression of her lips. On one side of her was a little waiter, bearing a glass of toast and water, and a cup of jelly; on the other side lay her well-worn Bible. "Yes," thought I, "excellent woman, you are right; you have all, and abound. The warm hand of sympathy supplies you with little niceties for the bodily appetite, and the book of God is your title-deed to a rich and everlasting inheritance. What could the mightiest, the wealthiest, enjoy more in your situation? We must all come to this! Though the universe were our own, a draught of water, a little sweetmeat, or something as simple and as common, would be all we could derive from it!"

I had a pleasing conversation with her, the impression

of which is still on my mind, though the particulars have escaped my memory. I commended her to the Divine keeping, in an act of worship, and rose to leave her.

She pressed my hand, and acknowledged my attention; "And pray," said she, "give my best love to Miss Reed; I can never forget her goodness: if I had a child of my own, she could not be kinder."

I left her, delighted with reflecting what an advantage and assistance a young minister derived from possessing such a sister.

The remaining instance arose to our notice by a paper which was presented on the Lord's day, entreating the prayers of the congregation in behalf of a family under peculiar distress. On the ensuing day, some inquiries were made, which ascertained the residence of this family; and Martha went to obtain the particulars.

She found the family the tenants of one room, which was dirty and miserable. The mother was sitting over a few dying coals, with several young children about her, without heart, apparently, to make the best of her own situation or theirs. The father lay in bed, with despondency on his countenance, and a nervous fever preying on his blood. It appeared that he had been master of a merchant-vessel, but that, from the failure of the firm which employed him, he had lost his appointment. That, week after week, he had been applying for a fresh appointment, and had failed in procuring one. That, in this interval, it had been necessary to dispose of almost every decent article of furniture and clothing, till they wanted even these expedients to secure their daily bread. That, at length, suspense, disappointment, and the approach of absolute want had overcome his spirits, and brought on his frame a debilitating and dangerous illness.

The family, at this time, were literally without bread, and incapable of seeking it. Martha took up their case with all the promptitude it demanded. She provided for the present calls of appetite; showed, through a considerable period, a thousand kind attentions, and succeeded in collecting a considerable sum, to assist the

mother in commencing some little trade, while the father was seeking an engagement in his proper vocation.

But the difficulty of such an engagement was becoming greater; and the wife, instead of supporting her husband in his endeavours, fell into negligent and intemperate habits, and not only expended what had been charitably bestowed, but ran him into the embarrassments of debt. At last, however, he obtained an actual appointment to a vessel, and his prospects brightened. But an individual who had expected this nomination wreaked his disappointment on this innocent man, by inducing a creditor to arrest him for about twenty pounds, and he was thrown into the —— of the borough.

I heard of his imprisonment, and went to see him. The poor man was almost desperate. He had looked to his appointment as the only means of redeeming himself and family from wretchedness, and now it appeared to be lost as soon as gained. The high charges for most miserable accommodations in this prison, by increasing his debt, made his escape every day more impossible: the promises which had been made to him, and which had been broken; the cruelty of a creditor, who cut him off from an opportunity of making payment; the treachery of a professed friend, who would throw him out of a situation with the hope of getting in; the want of confidence in his wife, and the misery of his children,—seemed to have alienated his mind from human sympathy, and to have rendered him an outcast from mankind.

I endeavoured to meliorate his views, and assuage his feelings, by reminding him of what the afflicted are so apt to forget, that we must not judge unfavourably of all men from the unkindness and infidelity of a few, or even of many. He received the observation in silence. I thought if I could refer to particular instances it would more affect him.

I remarked, "You found many friends when you were in our neighbourhood."

"Oh yes, sir," he replied, "many."

"And you remember the kind attention of a relative of mine to your family?"

"Miss Reed, sir! Miss Reed!" he exclaimed, with more animation and a quickened voice. "Oh yes, she was a friend indeed; I can never forget when first she came into our room; she was sent from heaven to save us!"

He became more free and composed. I endeavoured to present him with the religious grounds of consolation which were adapted to his trying circumstances, and to direct his mind calmly to the means most likely to effect his liberation.

I left him, rejoicing afresh in that beloved relative whose very name seemed to charm away the demon of desperation from the heart of man, and to restore the alien to his inheritance in the sympathies and hopes of the great human family.

But these recollections, pleasing as they are to me, will not of themselves do justice to the benevolence of Martha's character. Her affections were not localized; they were not influenced by place or party, by name or kindred, by colour or clime. The emotions of her heart, like the circles from the centre of a fountain, were strongest nearest home; but they expanded freely to the utmost boundary of human sympathy. Man was her neighbour, her brother, her father; she could not be indifferent to his welfare, though oceans rolled, or empires rose, between them.

She looked at man through those lights which Scripture supplies—as endowed with capacities by which he might rise to heaven, but as sinking down into sensuality, selfishness, and sin; as living without reliance on the Divine providence, or submission to the Divine authority; as the framer of his own wretchedness, and as contributing to the wretchedness of all around him; as shedding the influence of his crime over the fair face of earth, and the fairer aspect of heaven. She mingled her groans with those of "the whole creation," for the burthens and the bondage which sin has imposed; and she sincerely and deeply deplored the state of a world so full of the Creator's mercy, and so void of his praise!

Martha turned her eye from this heart-sickening sight, to dwell on the light and life of the Gospel. She contemplated it as rising above the accidents of human character, and the various forms of social and artificial life, and as admirably adapted, by its unity and simplicity of principle, to make its way to the wants of man as man, whether the inhabitant of Christendom or Barbary, of Iceland or Hindoostan. She dwelt often, and with sacred delight, on those prophecies and promises which are as highly poetical as they are strictly true and morally important, and which seem to pass over a slain world like the breath of the all-creating Spirit, for its renovation and recovery. In the visions of faith and imagination, she sought to forget the present disordered state of human existence while anticipating the glorious future. In the devout contemplation of this predicted period she found every thing to fill and gratify the mind; a period in which friendship shall fear no treachery, kindness no ingratitude, simplicity no foe; a period which shall be as free from tears as from wretchedness, and from wretchedness as from sin; a period which shall bring with it a day without night, joy without alloy, and life without disease and without end. Then shall the heavens rest in their own eternal light and tranquillity, and the earth rejoice in their favour. Then shall the wilderness blossom as the rose, and the desert be as a land which the Lord hath blessed. Then shall princes rule in righteousness, and the people live in peace. Then shall names and denominations become the mere landmarks of geography or the lights of history, and no more designate the degrading antipathies of the human heart. Then mankind shall become one brotherhood; the world their one blest habitation; and God, the living Jehovah, their guide, their protector, their father!

Feeding on these blessed hopes, Martha was eminently thankful that she lived in the present day, a day in which so many things are moving forward simultaneously to one grand event. Her spirit went entirely with those divinely originated societies which, if not the dawn of a millennial day, were the bright and morning

star which foretold its brilliant and quick approach. She therefore did her utmost by prayer, by contribution, and by influence to support their noble exertions; and she reposed in the conviction that, earlier or later, by giving unity of aim and effort to the scattered energies of the good and godly, they would ultimately form one great moral power, which shall move and restore a fallen world to its lost orbit of light and glory.

Perhaps, however, the following lines may be the best exposition of her feelings on this subject:—

THE MISSIONARY.

Bless'd be the man whose heart, expanding wide
With love of human kind, and fired with zeal,
Caught from the sacred cross, forsakes for this
His native land, and all his soul holds dear!
Bless'd be that pilgrim! Wheresoe'er he goes,
The barren desert smiles; the savage heart
Is melted into tenderness and love.
The captive exile, bounding from his chain,
Exults in liberty, and pours his praise
In lowly homage to the King of heaven!
If aught I envy, it is not the crown
Bedeck'd with jewels on the monarch's brow;
'Tis not the laurel which the hero wears,
All steep'd in blood; nor, far surpassing these,
The meed of him who, by the midnight oil,
Explores the depths of science, searches out
Nature's unfathom'd mine, intent to gain
His country's honour, and increase her stores.
Ah! 'tis the feelings of that man I crave
Who spreads the triumphs of redeeming love:
Who listens to the heathen's melting song,
Himself the instrument of all their joy:
O happy man! already overpaid
For all his sacrifice, his care, his toil.
God, in the present life, vouchsafes him more
Than houses, lands, and friends, or all combined;
And in the life to come he shall receive—
But how can words express, or heart conceive,
What Providence reserves for those bless'd souls
Whom it delights to honour! This we know—
He shall shine forth for ever as a star
Of no mean magnitude; and while he strays
Across the field of light, methinks his ear
Will oft be greeted by the welcome sound
Of Father! Father! O with what delight,
In lowest attitude, will he present
These children of the day to God and heaven,
And all that heaven contains. Ye holy men

Muse on this happiness, so pure, so high,
And be encouraged in your deeds of love!
Arise, ye sons of Albion, arise!
O be not prodigal of time! behold,
The day of your exertion closes fast,
And the still night advances. Myriads die
For lack of knowledge! Shall they thus expire,
Unwept, untaught, while you have pow'r to teach?
Shall they in anguish *die* ere you make known
The balm in Gilead—the Physician there?
Do ye then bear a Christian's hallow'd name,
And so forget to emulate the zeal
Of Him you worship?—O remember Him!
He left the courts of bliss, the highest heav'n,
And condescended, for our sakes, to dwell
In humble clay! A pilgrim and unknown,
He was a man of sorrows, versed in grief,
A spectacle to angels and to men.
When did he shrink from trials? when complain?
See from the cradle to the cross he goes,
A weary way, rejected, and alone.
No covert for his head, no want supplied—
No friend to share his sorrows! Like a lamb
Led forth to slaughter and to death he goes!
But to the last, and e'en when Justice pours
The tide of wrath on his devoted head,—
E'en then, and for his enemies, he prays!
Well, if ye will not rise to tell his love,
Sit still, and take your ease! But there will come
A time, not distant, when your hearts shall grieve
Because you went not up unto the help
Of the Most High! But ah, ye will arise!
I see ye going forth like to a host.
There is a shout within the camp! I hear
The Captain of salvation call you on,
And not in vain the summons! Mighty grace
Has won your hearts and fired them! Your whole life
Shall henceforth bear the signature of Heaven;
For Christ you live, and in his cause you die.
Peace, peace be with you! Holy men, go forth,
Strong in the Lord, rejoicing in his might.
O faint not, ye his husbandmen, who plant
The harden'd soil! The sun, the rain, are His!
He will command the blessing! When you lie
Forgotten in the dust, the seed will spring
Thirty, and sixty, and a hundred fold.
'Tis for the generations yet unborn
To bless your labours and repay the toil;
Your monument, their hearts—their lives, your praise!
God will himself be with you, even *He*,
Who speaks, and it is done! Yes, He will try
Your graces, to confirm them. You may feel
His searching hand within your very breasts;
The gourd in which you boast, he too may smite;
But his own love he will not take away;
Nor shall his promise fail; for He hath said,

The word of life shall not return again
Unbless'd by Him who sent it. He will work;
And *who* shall let? The kingdoms are the Lord's;
The universe his temple! Distant lands,
With one accord, shall celebrate his praise;
The Jew shall worship, and Messiah reign
The King of kings, the everlasting King.

CHAPTER XII.

DISCRETION. 1812–13.

"THERE are some members of a community," said the sagacious and witty Thomas Bradbury, "that are like a crumb in the throat: if they go the *right way*, they afford but little nourishment; but if they happen to go the *wrong way*, they give a great deal of trouble." There are others, it may be added, who have the inclination and ability to do much good, who yet, by their rashness or ill-humour, produce such a fearful proportion of mischief as to make it at least doubtful whether we are better with or without their exertions. Those are the truly estimable characters in every community of every scale who, in doing good, do no evil; who have energy, but whose energy is reined and regulated by discretion.

Martha, as the sister of an unmarried minister, became a centre to the female portion of a considerable congregation. This was a situation of usefulness, but it was also one of difficulty; and, at her age, and with her susceptibilities, it was not so surprising that she should be zealous to do good herself, and promote good works in others, as that her zeal should be attempered by prudence, and according to knowledge. Yet this excellence was hers in a high degree. She was the friend of the young, the comforter of the aged, a favourite with all. The fresh and kindly impressions formed by her first introduction to new connections were never effaced; they were improved

and strengthened by increasing intercourse. It may be said of her, through the whole term of her communion with a circle made up of such different ages, habits, and tempers, that she never lost a friend or made an enemy. Now, though undoubtedly friends may be lost, and enemies formed, not only without the fault, but by the very excellences, of an individual; yet, in the absence of these evils, there may surely be found a presumptive argument in favour of discreet deportment. As no subject enters more completely into the happiness of every-day existence, it may be profitable to descend to particulars.

Martha was guided in forming her friendships by *the perception of real piety*. This arose not merely from a persuasion that the heart which is not true to God could not be true to her, but chiefly from her inability to participate in a mutual sympathy where piety was wanting. Pious herself, she could not have free and intimate communion with those who were otherwise minded. With all her young companions she was kind, courteous, and communicative, hoping to win them to better thoughts and feelings; but it was only with those who were under a powerful religious influence that she could feel entirely happy, because they only were prepared to understand and value the predominant desires, hopes, and fears of her spirit.

In other society, too, she was jealous of her safety. She had seen many hopeful young characters fatally blighted by vain, trifling, ill-chosen companions; and she had too lowly an opinion of herself to suppose that she might stand securely where others had fallen. She always considered that, with such persons, there was even more likelihood of her receiving an injury than bestowing a benefit; and this made her circumspect over herself in the very act of doing good to others, while she sought repose only on the bosom of those who, with herself, were seeking and exercising confidence beneath the shadow of the Almighty's wings.

Martha always entered into society *with the serious desire of promoting her own and others' improvement.* Friendship with her was not a selfish compact, by which

she sought the gratification of selfish passions, without pausing to inquire whether it was right or delicate to do so; it was a talent put into her hand, which was to be justly appreciated and used, lest the trust should be violated. Her intercourse, therefore, never degenerated into idle gossiping or mysterious confidence. She never attempted to bind others to herself by tempting them to foolish confessions, which would never have been imagined if they had not been suggested; and which, if they had passed through the mind, ought never to have been adopted by the lips.

Yet Martha's youthful friendships were any thing rather than dull. In her presence, the trifling titter, the vacant giggle, and the noisy rattle were not found; but the smile of benevolence, the look of innocence, and those elevated and beautiful expressions which beam on the countenance of youth, when raised by great and serious objects, richly supplied their place. She was cheerful without lightness, and serious without sadness. She was not always talking of religion in a few set threadbare phrases; but religion always influenced her conversation, whatever might be its object; and her deep reverence and love of religion was rather perceived in the temper with which she treated of common and temporal things, than by any wordy declarations of its pre-eminent excellence.

She was *slow to take offence.* She never made a friend an offender for a hasty word, or a dubious expression of countenance or conduct. She was not ready to misconstrue motive, or to watch for the frailties of others. She was sensible of the variations of friendly feeling, but she did not allow herself to be governed by them. Trifles light as air were never allowed to come between her and her companions, to distress her by feverish jealousies, and her friend by endless explanations. She looked not to the single word, or look, or act, but to the uniform character; she dwelt not on the momentary feeling, which the individual might regret as deeply as herself; she considered the acknowledged and ruling principles of conduct. She always put the best construction on doubtful actions; and became the apologist of an

accused party, where it was not evident that the conduct had been *intentionally* and *morally wrong*. So far as she was personally concerned, it may truly be said that she never took offence except where offence was intended; and then, while she retired from one who was unfit for friendship, it was done with reluctance and pity, not with resentment.

If cause for offence arose, as more or less it will, Martha always sought a *prompt and candid explanation*. If, on the one hand, she did not permit her friendship to be affected by those infirmities which are discovered by the best and wisest; on the other hand, she would not allow her affections to canker and decline under wounds which, though not acknowledged, were deeply felt. If she could conquer an unfavourable impression, she did; if she could not, she revealed her thoughts to her friend. In this delicate act she was entirely governed by the Scriptural directions—she spoke to the *person concerned* —*alone*—and *in confidence*. Her opinion of the impropriety of another never reached the individual second-hand; she never debilitated the best motives to candid acknowledgment by exposing the wrong before witnesses; and the party knew that what was said would not be afterward ungenerously repeated to uninterested auditors.

In these exercises of the heart the *spirit* was in harmony with the act itself. It was most kind, and meek, and modest. She was the most gentle of reprovers. If ever any had occasion feelingly to adopt the words of the Psalmist on the subject, it must have been those who received admonition from her lips:—"Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, and it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head."

Scarcely need it be remarked that such a person *was ready, most ready to forgive*. She not only expressed herself to be so, but she took care to throw no obstacles in the way of acknowledgment, when it was necessary. There was no assumption—no sense of superiority—no supposed license to tell a friend a thousand unwelcome

truths. She prescribed no terms—insisted on no severe and humbling conditions. She never put the high-minded question, "How many times a day shall I forgive my brother?" She disliked the very name of forgiveness, as it necessarily involved somewhat of superiority. But with the name almost never on her lips, the disposition was always awake in her heart; and, had occasion required it, she could have as readily exercised it seventy as seven times a day. It was invariably enough if the conduct or expression *implied* sorrow, without the formal utterance of it; and even in such indications, she was so sincerely distressed, that it would have been difficult to ascertain from appearances who had done and who received an injury.

The act of forgiveness was as *complete* as it was delicate. She allowed no subsequent event to revive any thing which had been submitted to explanation, and on which she had expressed satisfaction. She could not always act up to the letter of the maxim, "Forgive and forget;" but she did more, she conformed to its *spirit*. She strove not to remember; and she never suffered what might remain on her memory to influence her temper, or to become matter of allusion, in any present misunderstanding.

Where character was at all concerned, it was a rule with Martha *not to listen to rumour and report*. She knew that Rumour had a hundred tongues, and that at least fifty of them were false. Character with her was a sacred thing, and she could not allow herself to alter the good opinion she had formed of any one, without the strongest and best established reasons. She knew that many actions could not be judged of rightly without knowing more than she could possibly know of attending circumstances; and that envy and malignity were ever too ready to give a colouring to such actions, till what was innocent appeared to be inconsistent, and what was merely inconsistent to be sinful. She shrunk from the whisperer, the tale-bearer, the slanderer, and the flatterer, as from beings unfit for friendship and most injurious to social happiness and religious confidence. The hint, the

insinuation, the proffered secret against the character of another, which contribute so much to begin or cement the friendships of half the world, were never well received by her; and those who offered them were pitied for a meanness and degradation of which they were too little conscious.

As she would not credit report, so *she would not assist its circulation*, even when too truly founded. She could find no pleasure in feeding on the defects of others; they were always seen with pain. If she might, she would close her eyes upon them; and happy was she if she could draw a veil over them from the eyes of others. It was a rule with her, that if she could say no good of an individual, she would not unnecessarily speak evil. She also admired the rule of Bishop Beveridge, which is as delicate as it is generous—"never to praise any one in his presence, nor to blame any one in his absence." That she might the more fully act upon these and similar maxims, she generally sought to converse rather of *things* than of *persons*—an excellent precaution, though less needed, perhaps, in her case than that of most other persons. No one offended less in word than she. I believe she never designedly uttered one sentence for which any human being was the worse. A considerable proof of this assertion is, that throughout a very extensive and entirely confidential correspondence, continued for many years, and treating of many persons and vicissitudes, there is not to be found one passionate, resentful, or uncharitable observation.

I cannot induce myself to bring these remarks to a close without making a brief quotation from her most intimate friend at this period. They apply not so much to her particular friendships as to her general acquaintances; and may serve to show how far she was from limiting her anxieties and regard to a select and favourite few of her own age and sentiments.

"In your sister, even at the early age of sixteen, I noticed what I have found in very few of any age or standing in the Christian profession—a tenderness of the

character of others, and an affectionate manner of administering reproof when necessary.

"She would often observe to me, 'Some say that love is blind; but I think real love opens the eyes. If I love a person, I desire others to love her too. I am therefore apt to watch closely the conduct of my friend; and when I discover the appearance of any thing wrong, I wish it to be seen and avoided: for I consider that others, who know less of my friend's good qualities than I do, may not be disposed to put so favourable a construction on the opposite ones.'

"When sometimes noticing the improprieties of professing characters, she would feel most keenly on the subject, and would devise a number of little expedients by which they might be led to see their error, without putting them to needless pain and embarrassment. 'Many,' she would remark, 'do not know what they occasion the world to say of them and of religion. If we could let them know what others are so ready to say of them, I am sure they would alter their conduct. But wisdom and tenderness must be exercised, especially by young persons towards older ones, or we shall lose the end at which we were aiming, and dishonour Him whom we meant to serve. One thing we can *always* do—we can pray for them.'

"This act she was never backward to perform. I have often witnessed the fervour of her prayers for those who did not in all things adorn the doctrine of the Gospel. Whenever she heard an individual spoken against, however unknown to her, she was ever prepared to offer some supposition in favour of the accused; either 'the party accusing might be misinformed,' or 'there might be many things in extenuation,' or 'at least, it should be mentioned to the individual, that an opportunity might be given for explanation.'

"Sometimes she would take this duty upon herself, if others would not. Her concern was in this case to convince the parties that she had a sincere interest in their welfare, and a deep sense of their excellences. 'Perhaps,' she would say, 'I am too scrupulous;' or 'I

am not sufficiently acquainted with the motives which actuate you ;' or ' I have been misinformed ;' or ' I am really too young to be capable of forming a right judgment. But I was afraid that others might think the worse of you for it ; and I should be grieved to hear any one speak of you with disrespect.' She had often the joy of seeing that her efforts were not in vain ; and even where the admonition was despised, I scarcely know an instance in which they were displeased with the admonisher."

In the pursuit of this simple but too unusual line of conduct, it is not to be told what good she effected, what evil she prevented ; what fires of anger and ill-will she extinguished, which might otherwise have preyed on the comfort and harmony of many a household ; what jealousies, and envyings, and heartburnings, and strifes she contributed to destroy in the very birth, which otherwise might have lived to roam over the fair enclosures of civilized society, seeking whom they might devour. Those will best conceive of the effect of her quiet exertions who are best acquainted with human life, and have soberly considered, with the most reflective of men, "How great a matter a little fire kindleth." If the whisperer and the calumniator, those plausible but noxious reptiles in the garden of social intercourse, are able to "separate between chief friends," and to break up their mutual and happy connections into two opposing and conflicting parties ; what shall be said of the advantages conferred by the individual who in one instance succeeds in neutralizing the poison which would work so disastrously, and by a steady example teaches others, less wary of the consequences, so to do ?

In seeking to advance social happiness, Martha insensibly promoted her own. The blessing of the peacemaker came upon her. She was cherishing a habit most favourable to her own peace and enjoyment. By accustoming herself to dwell on what is bright, and generous, and pitiful, and kind in human life, she was preparing numerous and inexhaustible sources of satisfaction and delight ; while those who habituate themselves to watch

for what is bad in human character, and to feed on it with secret and envious appetite, are fostering a demon in their bosom which shall eventually seal their eyes to the loveliness they would not see, and haunt their imaginations with pictures of evil, only evil, and evil continually!

Good arose to her not simply from those acts of mental discipline; she ultimately found herself surrounded by friends, who reflected upon her something of her own kindly feeling. She was amiable, and therefore beloved; she was discreet, and therefore trusted; she was modest, and therefore praised; she was pious, and therefore esteemed. Indeed she had a remarkable power to excite and engage attachment; and was as remarkably successful in the use of it. There seemed to be nothing about her to awaken the fears of the jealous, or to agitate the bile of the malignant. The rough and the gentle, the sensitive and the reflective, all thought well of her, and spoke as they thought; and those who intimately knew her had but one sentiment—it was the uniform, abiding, progressive sentiment of sincere affection.

It is of importance to remark, that the conduct in social life described throughout this chapter was dictated rather by the *heart* than the *head*. Martha owed nothing in her friendships to artful policy, wordy professions, or violent protestations; yet she did not neglect the voice of sober judgment or the maxims of tried prudence. On the contrary, she always deferred to them; she was in the habit of consulting the Proverbs of Solomon on her relative deportment; and she constantly spoke of them as unfolding invaluable principles of moral conduct, mixed with such rich and sagacious views of human nature as to make them an indispensable manual to those who would "cleanse their way" through a polluted and polluting world.

But it was the qualities of the heart which attracted the hearts of others towards her; and so far as I can venture on distinguishing them, it was eminently effected by her *humility* and *love*.

Humility was not merely admitted to be a cardinal

virtue in her creed; it was a disposition she diligently sought to cultivate; and it was the influence of this grace that produced so much of gentleness, candour, and forbearance. She always strove to think of others as better than herself; of herself as the least of all saints, and the most ungrateful of offenders. She could not be severe on the frailties of another, for she was frail. She could not declaim against the mote in a brother's eye, for a beam was in her own. She could not refuse to forgive her debtor his fifty pence, for she had been forgiven her five hundred; nor, though she was always offending, could she with confidence ask for pardon, but as she was prepared to pardon those who had trespassed against her.

Charity was the companion of her humility, and they reciprocally strengthened each other. This was indeed the paramount excellence of her character, and it subdued all things to itself. It had cast out fear and enabled her "to lay aside all malice, and all pride and hypocrisy and envy, and all evil-speaking," that she might have her conversation in the world in simplicity, and without offence. It never allowed her to wait, in her social intercourse, for the recurrence of the cold half-forgotten rule of conduct; it spontaneously suggested all that was forgiving, candid, and compassionate. The incomparable sketch of this grace in its excellence, nature, and importance by the hand of the apostle Paul, was with her a most favourite portion of Scripture. It was, in fact, a study to her. If her charity was ever in danger of failing through manifold trials, she studied it, that the feeble grace might be confirmed; if she was ever subject to the world's ridicule for what it might consider the tameness of her spirit, she had recourse to it and was justified; and, at all times, her admiration of it would dispose her to dwell on this lovely picture with insatiable pleasure. Indeed she dwelt upon it till she was greatly changed into the same image. She suffered long, and was kind; she envied not; she vaunted not herself, and was not puffed up. She did not behave herself unseemly; sought not her own; was not easily provoked; thought

no evil; rejoiced not in iniquity, but rejoiced in the truth. She bore all things; believed all things; hoped all things; endured all things. She had faith, hope, and charity; but the greatest of these three was CHARITY.

It is easy to imagine how well these admirable dispositions are adapted to work the effects which are here ascribed to them; how powerful they are in exciting esteem, conciliating affection, and creating influence—the influence of genuine goodness. Without these, the most acute sagacity will fail to weave the ties of a disinterested and imperishable friendship; and with them, and with little else, we shall find in our utmost need, if not many friends, at least some one friend, whose heart has answered to our heart, and who shall be as "a brother born for adversity, and a friend who loveth at all times."

CHAPTER XIII.

TRIALS. 1812–13.

WHERE is the one point in human existence on which any child of Adam can place his finger and say, Then I was happy! When the stream of life is gliding most pleasantly along, there will still be found some undercurrent crossing its progress; and which, if not seen foaming on the surface, is too surely felt troubling its inward tranquillity.

The period on which we are pausing might be considered a most happy one in the life of Martha. She was esteemed by her connections, beloved by her friends, the delight of her relations; she dwelt among those she loved, and made them the happier by her presence; she was pursuing with success her own improvement, and promoting to her uttermost the good of others; she was

free from what are usually denominated worldly cares, and living in blessed sympathy with things unseen and eternal: what then could now arise to give her uneasiness and vexation?

Apart from those sources of painful reflection which were previously open to her, she suffered much during this period from an unexpected termination of her earliest and most intimate friendship. The intercourse was closed at the request of her parents; and that request originated in a conviction that the two young friends were not exactly suited to each other.

In acting on such a conviction, it is scarcely necessary to say that blame is not to be imputed to any one of the parties. It is readily understood that two young persons may be of excellent character and principles, and yet not be so adapted to each other as to produce their common benefit and felicity. There may be a difference of age, or of temper, or of habit, or of taste; there may be too much susceptibility or too little; they may both run into one extreme, and so increase their mutual hazard, or they may run each to opposite extremes, and so chafe each other's disposition. Any of these variations, trifling as they seem, may be so exercised as to render an intimacy injurious which would otherwise be most advantageous; and it must be admitted that, though parents may sometimes err in forming a judgment on these, they are, generally speaking, best qualified to make a candid and kind opinion; and that they are discharging some of their highest trusts to their offspring in interposing a mild authority, on the suggestions of their best and calmest discretion.

Supposing this measure to be as wise and salutary as it was meant to be, it did not affect Martha the less severely. It was her first friendship; and it was formed at a time when her susceptible heart knew no disappointment, was checked by no control; it had been cemented by a thousand mutual acts of love, of piety, and of confidence. No later friendship had power to weaken her interest in this original one; it stood out in her view as chief of them all. It was now also regarded

with particular tenderness, as her friend was exposed to great relative afflictions. The idea of relinquishing her at all was opposed to her earliest and strongest attachments; but the thought of appearing to give her up when she most needed the proofs of sympathy and fidelity deeply wounded her generosity.

The difficulty of this service was not at all diminished by any perception of its propriety. For the present, Martha could not view the subject through the same medium as her parents; and the most, therefore, she could do was to obey a command the reason for which she could not rightly appreciate. This was a great trial to her submission, and she sustained it worthily, but not without very sore affliction. Throughout her correspondence nothing of the kind seems to have given her equal distress; while her distress is unmixed with one word of complaint.

The keen edge of our sufferings is often given by our own hand. Martha thought she could not bring others to perceive how valuable this friendship was to her, and therefore she scarcely tried. Had she fully communicated the amount of her feelings on the subject, her parents, in balancing one thing against another, might have reconsidered their decision; or had her attachment not been, as it undoubtedly was, excessive, she might have felt there was some weight in their conclusion: but as it was, she had to drink her cup in all its bitterness, while none but herself knew that it was so bitter. She afterward reviewed the subject in truer and calmer lights, and employed the errors of her experience for the right conduct of others.

The spirit is frequently willing when the flesh is weak. Martha's mind readily submitted to the yoke of parental authority, but her physical powers were not so adequate to the effort. Those powers had been much shaken before, and this event once more unsettled them. It not only affected her by the real loss of an endeared friendship, but by its imaginary influence in strengthening her mind to endure other and secret sorrows. It was by this friendship alone that she could seek relief under those

anxieties of the heart which, in defiance of her, would occasionally oppress her spirits; and in earlier days it had been eminently useful. She had insensibly weaned herself from making any allusions to the subject with her friend, on which she had forbidden herself to think; and probably had the opportunity for free intercourse been continued, it would not again have been so employed. But, such is the waywardness of human nature, immediately the opportunity appeared to be lost, it was imagined to be indispensable; the foolish heart, which with liberty to speak would have had nothing to tell, seemed ready to burst for utterance the moment utterance was denied.

About this time I was going to C—— for a few weeks; and finding Martha more indisposed than usual, which we all ascribed to exertion rather than anxiety, I determined to separate her from her engagements by taking her with me. We again, therefore, started as fellow-travellers to a place which, I considered, was interesting to her only by pleasing associations.

When we are sincerely desirous of administering to the comfort of a friend, how little are we able! what we present as balm may work as poison! I was now unconsciously conveying my sister to a spot which, in any circumstances, must have awakened painful recollections, and which, in existing circumstances, was likely to nourish them in a dangerous degree: recollections which, had I known of their being, I should have sought to wither and eradicate.

However, we journeyed on, refreshed in our progress; and seeking, by a good word or a good book, to cast some profitable seed by the way. Martha was evidently out of spirits, but I considered they would improve daily. They however sensibly diminished as we approached towards our destination. She lost her pleasure in conversation; if it was continued, it was with a constraint the more visible to me as I had seldom observed it. When she was not actually directing her looks to me, the light of cheerfulness forsook her features, and they settled down into dejection. I was induced to think something pressed on her mind, and yet I could not imagine what;

nor could I bring myself to put the question, lest she should be embarrassed in refusing a reply. My thoughts took the complexion of hers, and I became somewhat moody and silent.

When the clouds of heaven are predisposed to weep, the mere firing of a gun, or ringing of a bell, will supply the occasion. I happened to break one of our intervals of pensiveness, by making some remark on the uncertainty of human hopes. Martha made no answer; and on turning my eye upon her, I saw the big and heavy tears falling from her lids. As they were thus detected, she lost her motive for suppressing them, and they flowed long and freely.

A tear is sometimes the very best introduction we can have to a delicate subject. Martha found her tears had prepared me to hear of something of which I was ignorant, and she therefore hastened to unbosom herself of her secret. Every thing it was needful to know, in order to form a correct judgment, she told in brief and modest words; and then alluded to the anxieties and conflicts which had arisen from it, and the pain she had felt in not finding resolution to name it before.

"And why," I exclaimed, "did you not name this before?"

"Because I feared I should lose your good opinion—I feared you would despise me."

"Despise you!" I replied hastily; "no—I despise him who—"

Her countenance checked my speech; no anger was visible there, and I felt I was in danger of wounding whom I desired to heal.

"And why," I continued, "did you consent to come with me to this place? We would have gone in another direction had I known it."

"I thought in your company I could bear it, and I wished to try. And so I can. It is all over now," said she, compressing the muscles of the face, and brushing away the pendent tear.

But the tears were rebuked too soon, and another, and another, and another came. Need I be ashamed to say

that mine too were started, and that we wept silently together on our solitary way!

The effect of this communication was altogether beneficial to my sister's mind. It provided vent to her feelings at a time when circumstances had made it peculiarly desirable; and it allowed her to communicate generally without fear or restraint. She had now no point of reserve which insensibly fettered her intercourse on other subjects, lest they might unawares open a passage to it. Her spirit was free, her heart was open and at ease. She felt she had again one friend with whom she could confer, if conference should be necessary: and this destroyed the power of imagination on her mind. Strict and close as our intercourse had been, it became more dear and intimate than ever. Pruned and mortified in other directions, her affections seemed to gather more fondly round her brother; and the living and heartfelt intercourse of this short period, with the manifest complacency she had in it, are among those simple but touching occurrences in the life of our friendships which are not to be forgotten.

For myself, I believe the very first impression on this disclosure was that of alarm. I could not in a moment look at the affair as a thing of months and years; I could not distinguish time. The danger of which I had just heard I could hardly conceive of as past; it was like hearing of a friend's decease in some foreign land: one cannot at once think of it as occurring six months since. I had lived long enough to observe many a young heart, too young and too confiding to suspect danger, entangled, abused, disappointed, and withering away, beneath the preying sense of unuttered wrong. I was aware that if ever Martha were likely to prove weak in trial, it would be in such a one, from a disposition so guileless, affectionate, and almost impenetrable to any kind of suspicion. It had therefore been my desire to give more vigour to her mind by cultivation, that it might balance the strength of her affections before she should be exposed to any of those snares which too surely await the unwary, from the hand of folly, of inconsideration, or

of wickedness. What, then, was my surprise and misgiving, when I found she had been exposed to the very dangers I deprecated, while I thought her perfectly secure; and that she had been called to make her defence, all unprepared as I conceived her to be, for the conflict!

These emotions, however, were transitory, and gave place to those of wonder and admiration. I was now furnished with a true key to her deportment. I saw that she had been exposed to the very trials I most dreaded; that they had come on her in so specious a form as to authorize her hope and confidence; that she had suffered from them most severely; but that she had not been subdued or carried away by her distress: that alone she had struggled with the difficulty of her situation; that she had not sunk into selfish despondency, but looked round for the means of deliverance; and that she had actually adopted the best which wisdom itself could suggest. I perceived that those pursuits which I had considered as preventive she was employing as remedial; and that though temporary feeling would be excited, they were working to a most successful issue. And when I reflected that all this was done alone, and in youth, and against warm passions, injured nerves, and occasional fits of depression; that she had resolutely preferred exercise and occupation to a seducing retirement and listless revery; that she had listened to the claims of the understanding, and resisted the clamours of the heart; that she had overcome her own sorrows, and had exerted herself to mitigate and heal those of others; that at the very time she was the life and joy of her family, her heart was often full unto breaking; and that from her cheerful labours of love she often retired to gather up her tears, and then returned to smile again benevolently on all around her; I was filled with admiration, and even with astonishment! It gave me new views of my sister's character. "Can it be possible?" I was ready to say; "can there be such irrepressible energy with such tenderness of heart?" I was prepared to believe Martha might be trained to this, but could hardly conceive of it

as already existing. Those only who have been enabled to bear up against the *ennui* of disappointed hope, the bitterness of deceived confidence, and the temptations of a wounded spirit to feed luxuriously and in solitude on its own griefs, and to do this in a steady course of disinterested exertions for the happiness of others, can rightly judge of the sacrifices that were made, or of the power necessary to make them.

But the lessons we learn in the school of affliction are generally quickly and well learned. The heart is softened, and it receives easily, and retains indelibly, the proposed impression. Martha had not merely been exposed to affliction, but to affliction of peculiar pungency and power. It had placed her in a most trying and critical situation; but a situation which was made subservient to her improvement. Her attention was carried more closely to herself; she watched the workings of her heart; she witnessed some of those tempestuous conflicts of passion which reveal in a glance more of the depths of human character than an age of common feeling. She saw her weakness, felt her danger, and detected more clearly her constitutional infirmities. She became more jealous of herself, and resolved to resist the pleadings of selfishness. She commenced the struggle: she persevered, and she was now rising from it, not merely to comparative peace and security, but attended with the richest spoils of conquest.

There was an addition made to her *confidence*. She felt, not as he who resolves to fight, but as he who returns from the battle won. Her armour had been tried, and it had been found adequate to her protection. She was inspired with more of *independence*. She had leaned on herself, and had been deceived; had leaned on others, and they had failed her; and now, like some tender plants denied the support natural to them, her character shot out the more vigorously, and asked nourishment of the skies. Her habits of *self-control* were exercised and strengthened. The sensibilities which she was tempted to indulge, and which she could scarcely think so dangerous as in fact they were, had

appeared before her in new forms. She deeply felt the necessity of subduing and regulating them. The effort was made, and it was successful. It was the ascendency of principle over passion. It brought with it not only the good I am noticing, but gave a tone and colouring to the entire character.

The moment in which the claims of principle are triumphant over those of passion is a point of time in the history of character the most interesting and auspicious. It contributes largely to the formation or settlement of the mind, and brings with it the elements of all that is good or exalted. Passion relaxes and enfeebles the spirit; principle braces and invigorates it. Passion is dark, stormy, and vexatious, like the troubled sea which cannot rest; principle, like the rocks of our shore, stands out the bulwark of the soul in the night of adversity. Passion is the voice of that old serpent, ever the most dangerous when most beguiling; principle is the voice of God in the soul of man, calling him off from the enchantments of earth and sense to communion and confidence in Him, without whom the strongest are weak, and the best protected insecure in the hour of trial!

CHAPTER XIV.

PIETY. 1811–14.

I CANNOT persuade myself to close a period so strikingly developing the moral energies of my sister's character, without distinctly remarking that they were created and sustained by the influence of genuine piety. As religion had refined her mind and exalted her tastes in the day of peaceful enjoyment, so it had fortified her heart in the time of calamity. She was enabled to resolve on a line of conduct best adapted to her deliverance by the power of principle; and principle derived

its existence and force from the higher power of godliness. Indeed, these two are inseparable; and there would be little necessity for insisting on their union, were it not that an attempt is constantly made to divide them, by many who would fain be thought to admire the offspring while they repudiate the parent.

It is readily admitted that, without the presence of piety, an individual might recover herself from similar circumstances of trial. The temptation might not fix on the peculiar weaknesses of her nature; and vanity, pride, resentment, or insensibility might raise her above it; and she would be safe, till exposed to that ensnarement which better accorded with the special frailties of her nature. But Martha was assailed at once where she was weakest. There was no contrary reigning passion to oppose evil to the invading evil; and yet she overcame. Now, though a person may conquer some one sin without giving any evidence of real piety, because that sin may be subdued by a stronger corruption; yet, if he is enabled to conquer his constitutional infirmities and "easily besetting sins," he furnishes, not merely proof, but the very highest proof of piety. It is not one selfish propensity overcoming another; it is every selfish propensity, the mightiest and the dearest, vanquished and led captive by a principle above one's self, and distinct from one's self. This is *self-denial;* and this is the very essence of all religion.

Independently on what is possible, it is certain in Martha's case that the progress and triumph of principle is to be referred entirely to religious influence. This might be fairly inferred from every thing in her history and character; but it was also the subject of her frequent, explicit, and grateful acknowledgment. Religion gave her light to see the extent of her dangers; and courage to contend with them; and hope to anticipate brighter prospects; and benevolence to turn from her own anxieties, and interest herself in the good of others. Religion brought her feeble and erring spirit into communion with Deity, and taught her to lean on the arm of Omnipotence, to submit to the will of a wise and infinite

Sovereignty, and to lay hold of that righteousness and those promises which are "unto all and upon all them that believe." She believed; and "this was the victory that overcame even her faith." "By faith," which is essentially a disposition to serve God, and trust in him under all circumstances, "she endured as seeing him who is invisible." By faith she waxed valiant in fight, and out of weakness was made strong. By faith she confessed she was not her own, but that she was bought with a price; and that it became her not to please herself, but to please Him who had graciously accomplished her redemption. And what is there may not be effected by such sentiments and principles, not merely acknowledged to be true, but framed in the heart as the motives of action?

If it is of importance to trace these victorious exercises of mind to the energy of real piety, it is at least of equal practical importance to inquire by what means piety itself was nourished to so much energy. This inquiry will necessarily lead to a brief but, it may be hoped, profitable notice of Martha's devotional habits, as they were particularly connected with this period, and generally with the previous and subsequent periods of her life.

Martha sought to cherish the work of personal piety by *frequent and secret prayer.* She knew whence every good thought and every holy desire proceeded; and that prayer was only applying for them at their proper source. If prayer was regarded as a medium of communicating her wants, it was likewise considered as an important means of grace for the promotion of every devout affection. It brought her into audience with the Being she most revered and loved; and lifted her spirit above earthly anxieties. It sweetened her mercies, lightened her burthens, and sanctified to her the various allotments of life.

Apart from the share she had in domestic worship, she was accustomed to engage in prayer twice in the course of the day. Usually, these exercises were observed as early in the morning and evening as was compatible with other duties; that, in the one case, her first thought might be rightly engaged, and in the other, her devotions might

not be postponed to an hour in which the body and mind would be too fatigued and heavy properly to regard them. In these devotions, her prayers were not only mental, they were oral likewise; she chose to give a regular and distinct utterance to her desires, as she thought it assisted the clearness of her conceptions, and prevented her from running into a loose and careless manner in so solemn an engagement.

But although Martha found it desirable to mark her devotions by time and form, her spirit was not limited by the one or the other. Prayer was not to her a cold duty, to which conscience occasionally drove her; it was not local, it was not verbal, it was not a painful and artificial act; it was the breath of her soul habitually and imperceptibly ascending towards Him who inspired it. It may be said of her as the Psalmist said of himself—she gave herself unto prayer. The spirit of prayer attended, and fed upon, every thing in which she was engaged. Seldom did she give away a tract, or relieve a want, or discharge a common duty, without inward and almost unconscious prayer; and if serious engagements were before her, they were made the subject of especial supplication.

The life of piety and prayer was sustained by *reading and meditation.* The kind of reading adopted was in harmony with the end proposed—it was strictly devotional. The Scriptures were read in their connection; and their impression was supported by some of our best pieces of experimental divinity, and the biography of eminently pious persons.

This reading was digested and made effectual by meditation, an exercise in which she had great delight. It was conducted in the same spirit; and her reflections were not allowed to become discursive or speculative. She did not seek, at these seasons, to make fresh acquisitions to her knowledge; but to apply what she already knew with more force to her conscience, and to entertain it with greater warmth in her heart. Her thoughts dwelt, therefore, on the elements and first principles of divine truth; on her sinfulness and demerit; on her privileges and obligations; on the excellence of the Gospel, and the

unspeakable love of her Redeemer; on the vanity of time, and the awfulness of an approaching eternity. That these and similar sentiments might never be absent from her, she usually charged her memory, at the opening of each day, with some short passages from an inspired or other writer, which accorded with them, as a motto for her thoughts in the intervals of occupation which might arise. She considered herself to have derived great advantage, and redeemed much time, by this plan; and there can be no doubt that it contributed to save her from treating with levity, as many do, the first and simple lessons of religion, which indeed, like our common and daily bread, are by far the most valuable portion of whatever knowledge we may afterward attain.

Prayer and meditation were sustained by *self-examination*. She could not meditate without looking further into her own heart; nor could she pray without the guilt of hypocrisy, unless she inquired into her present wants. More or less she habituated herself to this at the close of each day; she "communed with her own heart, and was still." She calmly reviewed the motives, the temper, the actions of the day, that she might make sincere confession, and exercise future watchfulness.

The object she endeavoured to keep distinctly before her in these examinations was the *reality* and the *progress* of *personal piety*. She thought that the temptation of the present time is to neglect it; that if our forefathers erred in preferring the enjoyments of the closet to the claims of the world, we were exposed to the more dangerous error of losing all relish for the quiet duties of retirement, in the excitement and bustle of our numerous public religious engagements. She therefore was jealous over herself, lest in attempting to keep the vineyard of others she should be found to have neglected her own.

To assist her in preventing all self-deception on this most vital subject, she formed her judgment of the state of piety from what it was in *retirement alone*. She considered that all spiritual declensions began in the closet; and that, therefore, they might be earlier detected by seeking them there. She knew that, in social religious

services, manifold considerations—novelty, taste, vanity, party-spirit, worldly interest—might create a factitious relish for them; but that in the closet, where the world was shut out, where there was no eye to see, no ear to listen but God's, the heart was liable to no such deception. Whatever, therefore, might be the strength of her emotion or the height of her joy in public engagements, she allowed them to plead nothing in favour of her real state of mind, if they left her to carry to her closet a heart cold and indifferent, without humility and without gratitude.

But although Martha would not derive the test of her progress from her regard to the more social services of religion, she was far from undervaluing them; and her *devotedness to these public means of grace* must be named as contributing instrumentally to her advancement in piety. Indeed, her uniform and lively attachment to the ordinances of religion was strikingly discovered in her whole deportment. I believe it may most truly be said, that throughout her Christian walk, she did not lose by negligence, or the want of properly economizing her time, one opportunity of attending divine worship which she could consistently embrace. To go into the house of God, to mingle with the people of God, to worship the perfections of God, and to listen to the word of God, these were among her highest pleasures—pleasures which never cloyed—pleasures which increased the appetite for them by enjoyment.

The Sabbath was to her a delight; honourable, and she honoured it. She entered on it with an air of serene cheerfulness, which is not only compatible with, but the fruit of, seriousness. Every thing of a worldly nature that could be done previously to its arrival was done; there was no bustle, no confusion, no needless provision for the flesh. In attending the public services of the day, it was a point with her to be in time. She considered that it was a duty she owed to herself, to her fellow-worshippers, and to the Being she professed to honour and worship; and that she might not fail in it, she generally arranged to arrive a few minutes before the

service commenced a practice which she often named as highly beneficial to herself.

Her manner and temper were equally exemplary. There was no irreverent posture, no vacant countenance, no eye wandering from pew to pew, person to person, and dress to dress. She did not attend these public exercises to see and be seen, or to hear and criticise, or to trifle and be amused. On entering the temple, she considered herself at once engaged with adorable and omniscient Deity, who had promised his presence to his humble worshippers: she was anxious to sit at the feet of her divine Instructer, and to carry on a large and profitable commerce with the heavenly world.*

In this elevation of mind, the minister in word and doctrine was not slighted or forgotten; his office and character were appreciated as every faithful pastor would desire his charge to think of them. He was not in danger of being idolized as a novelty, and finally cast away as a worn-out toy. She did not look at him as a performer, nor listen to him as an orator. She wanted not to be delighted, but to be edified; not to be made acute, but to be made holy by his ministrations. She sought, by his offices, to be introduced to his Master; to be fed on the bread of life and the water of life, and to know more of the will of her Saviour in its testamentary bequests and sacred obligations. If the minister was proposing the same objects to himself, she "esteemed him very highly in love for his work's sake;" and in proportion as that work filled his heart and influenced his labours, she was concerned to confide in his instructions, to pray for his succour, to sympathize in his trials, and, by any means in her power, to promote his honour, comfort, and usefulness.

* These and some subsequent remarks might seem needless in connection with such a character as the writer is describing, were it not that one is called, so frequently called, to observe habits grow on persons of acknowledged piety and conscientiousness, which disfigure their profession, and which, if they could rightly perceive, they would not in the least approve. The young should be strictly cautious of sliding imperceptibly into habits and compliances which, if they should be harmless to themselves, are indecorous in the eyes of others.

If such conduct as is here briefly specified sprang from piety, it will be seen, by a reaction common to good and bad principles, it also greatly advanced the work of piety. If a loose and partial attendance on public ordinances has its advantages, what must be their influence when attended in the spirit and the punctuality now described! And one cannot avoid the reflection, that if every member of our congregations were thus to fill his *proper place* in the *proper time*, and with a *becoming temper*, our assemblies would present a very different picture of order and quiet loveliness. One might hope then that the spirit of solemnity would pervade our sanctuaries, and assist our devotions at the footstool of the Eternal; and that the spirit of conviction would more frequently seize the casual visiter, and constrain him "to fall down and worship God!"

Martha's pious dispositions were increased by her *constant endeavour to improve all events so as to strengthen them*. To those who look for them, such events are commonly to be found. Martha, although her circumstances were happily appointed, was always meeting with something which she thought might be consecrated to these purposes. If disappointment arose, she impressed on her mind the lessons of resignation; if success, she urged herself to additional gratitude. When eminent piety stood out before her, she tasked herself to copy it; and the evils she saw daily arising from unholy and ungoverned tempers set her especially to watch over, and seek the subduction of, her own.

She was particularly affected, during the period which it is my object to illustrate, by the evident declension of some young persons from the ways of godliness, of whom she had cherished the best expectations. They had started nearly with herself in the profession; they had run well; she had hoped to pass with them to the goal: but they were hindered; they were drawn aside by the ensnarements of error, or by the love of the present world. She was very deeply affected by such occurrences. She humbled herself on account of them, confessing that she was as liable to err and to fall, and

praying not only for them, but for herself, that she might never be seduced by Satan or any of his devices, by the world or any thing that is in the world. Thus it was, that the failings of others promoted her dependance and security, as we see a man urged to a timely repair of his mansion from witnessing the ruinous effects of dilapidation in the dwelling of his neighbour.

In connection with these remarks it should be observed, that Martha sought the advance of piety in her heart by the *jealous avoidance of whatever was injurious to its interests.* I speak not now of worldly amusements and worldly fellowship; these are forbidden; and the allusion is not to what is expressly *forbidden*, but to what is *uncongenial and inexpedient.* And in judging of these qualities, she was not governed by the opinion of others so much as by her own experience. If any thing was found prejudicial to *her*, that was reason enough for avoiding it, though to others it should be wholesome and nutritive. Of course her judgment was called to pronounce on things innumerable as they arose; but it may be desirable to state, that she was convinced, from observing their effects on others, that *anger, levity, and Sabbath-day visiting; idle gossiping, wordy disputation*, and *party spirit; excess of foreign engagements*, and *a desultory occupation of time;* association with those who held their profession in a *formal* and *worldly spirit;* and the perusal of *books of light and trifling character, professedly moral,* but not in accordance with the *pure morality* of revelation, were eminently unfriendly to the exercise and growth of sterling piety, and had commonly led to serious defection from the paths of godliness.

Martha was not even content in shunning these; it was her concern to avoid whatever might *possibly* affect her, as she concluded these would. She never desired to occupy *debatable* ground, or to dwell on the borders of good and evil. That worldly question, How far may I go and be safe? never arose to her lips; she rather inquired, How far may I retire, and be consistent? She shunned the very appearance or shadow of evil. To resist her enemy, she fled from him, well knowing that

to parley was to be fascinated and overcome. Thus it was that the flame of piety lived and brightened in its own element, and was not rashly exposed to every counteracting influence. It was not the flower of the field, unprotected from every rude foot or ravenous animal; it was the flower of the garden, hedged about with thorns, screened from the biting blast, cherished by a watchful hand, and living under the most genial heat and gentlest dews of Heaven.

Nor can this chapter be dismissed without observing *that affliction was undoubtedly among the means which promoted the work of piety.* If Martha was supported beneath her afflictions of body and mind by the hand of piety, piety, in return, was advanced by her afflictions. Trial and suffering are to the spirit what exercise is to the corporeal frame; none are healthy or vigorous without them. Affliction, of some class or other, is indispensable to our welfare in the present state; and the Christian is "chosen in affliction," preserved by affliction, purified by affliction, "perfected by suffering."

Martha was now becoming a powerful instance of the happy effects of sanctified affliction. It enabled her to form a juster estimate of life, of herself, and of all things. It called into early exercise her submission and patience. It gave increased energy to acts of faith, and reality to its existence. She had trusted in the Lord, and had been delivered; she had rested on him, and had been supported; she had looked to him, and had been enlightened; she had rejoiced in him, and had been happy; and she now felt towards him as a friend, who is not only believed to be faithful, but who has been tried, and *found to be so.* Prayer was the dearer, from its having so often given vent, and brought relief to, her sorrows; and meditation the more inviting, since it had frequently borne her on its wings above sublunary vexation. The world was the more vain, from her experience of its utter insufficiency in the hour of need; and Heaven the more charming, from its having stood in direct contrast with the deceitful and fleeting and shadowy forms of this present life. She could say emphatically,

that "it was good for her that she had been afflicted." Tribulation had wrought patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope made her not ashamed, because the love of God was shed abroad on her heart by the Holy Ghost, which was given unto her.

CHAPTER XV.

RELAXATION. 1814.

MARTHA returned with me from C—— to her home, very much at ease in her mind, and considerably invigorated in bodily health. She cheerfully renewed her attention to those pursuits which have been described, and continued, through this winter, the life and joy of her relatives and connections.

But the flame of life and love burnt too ardently for the frail vessel which contained it. Amid so many opportunities of showing kindness, of mitigating wo, and instructing ignorance, it was nearly impossible to prevent her doing too much, and, what is even more prejudicial to a weakly frame, sympathizing too much. It was the only subject upon which her family held a serious controversy with her, and often was it revived by the evening fireside. Frequently she would see serious concern settle in her father's countenance on detecting her real exhaustion under assumed sprightliness, and, touched by it, would embrace him affectionately.

"Ah, my dear child," he would say, sighing, and returning the embrace, "this is wrong—very wrong!"

"Wrong, pa'!"

He would shake his head.

"I have been doing very little to-day, pa'—very little indeed. You know you say, it is better to *wear* out than to *rust* out."

"Yes, my love *fairly to wear* out, but not to *tear* out."

"No, dear pa'; but one ought to do all one possibly can in a good cause, ought we not?" turning to her mother, whose warmth of devotedness she knew favourable to the reply she wished.

"Oh, do not make your appeal to me," her mother would say playfully; "ask your brother."

"Ah, she will not ask me," her brother would remark.

"Yes, but indeed I will, brother! I know you think we ought to do all we can do."

"I think, with our good king, *that we ought never to do so much as we can.*"

"Brother!"

"I mean by it just what he did, that we are not to press our energies, either of body or mind, to the *very uttermost.* By doing *more* than our strength permits to-day, we shall do *less* than we might to-morrow. Besides, there is the danger of overstraining the *bow*, which may never recover its elasticity."

"And you remember," her father would continue, "what Mr. Romaine said when he heard of the incessant preaching of Mr. Whitefield—'I shall, perhaps, preach *more sermons*, only I shall be *longer about* it.'"

Such conversations, however, did not produce all the conviction that was desirable. In youth, it is difficult to conceive of injury being done to the health till it is felt, and the blessing of health is seldom valued but in proportion as it is lost. Yet Martha did place restraints occasionally on herself, in compliance with the known desires of her friends, and under a sense of duty; but possibly when a *partial* relaxation was adopted, a *total* one was necessary, and her spirits uniformly rose above her strength. Added to this, her indifference to herself, the precariousness of life, her love to her Redeemer, and her concern to express it in labours of self-denial and benevolence towards his members on earth, formed in her so powerful a motive of action as greatly to raise her above *temporal* considerations. Nothing is more difficult than, in the midst of much to be done, which it is most important to do, patiently to wait and to do but little, or even to do nothing, as Providence shall direct;

and it is not strange if Martha was yet imperfect in the lesson.

As Martha could not have all the rest from excitement necessary to the fragility of her health while in town, her friends sought to accomplish the end by inducing her to change the scene occasionally. In pursuance of this plan, she went in the summer of this year to Broadstairs with a young friend, and she received considerable benefit from the comparative quiet it imposed on her. It must be termed *comparative only*, for the circumstance of being separated from those she most loved gave her uneasiness; and although in a place ever so strange, she could not be satisfied without seeking some opportunities of doing good. Those opportunities, in such a situation, might be few and small; but there might often be more real exhaustion of spirits in seeking them and not finding them, than in finding and improving them. Perhaps I cannot do better than to allow her to speak for herself.

"Wishing, my dear ——, to supply as much as possible our absence from each other, I mean to keep, more or less, a journal for you. After some suspense and disappointment, we left town for Margate. We slept at this place, and then went over to Broadstairs, where we have procured lodgings. Here we shall enjoy all the pleasures of the country and the sea, without the bustle and parade of the town. I need not say this is what pleases me."

"Went to Kingsgate and Reading-street, two small villages. It was a pleasant walk. I believe I have been to five villages this week, all of which are near either Ramsgate or Margate, and none of them has a Sunday-school! Oh, my dear, let every instance we see, either of activity or lukewarmness in others, stimulate us to renewed devotedness!

"I take up my pen under the influence of headache and low spirits, hoping to mitigate the one and remove the other. I feel much the absence from my friends. It is almost three weeks since I saw my dear brother; and though I see so little of you, I feel being at this

distance. How strange that we should be so strongly attached to a state whose pleasures are mixed with pain. Let us look at those things which change not—perish not—with the using."

"I feel very poorly to-day. I should be glad of your company for half an hour; it would rouse my spirits. I suppose you are at C——, and enjoying, I hope, much temporal and spiritual good, and not only blessed yourself, but rendered a blessing to others. Never may we take a journey, pay a visit, or enter on a day without asking what we can do to show our love to the Saviour! And, that we may have it in our power to do all our circumstances will admit, never let us expend a *single penny* needlessly."

"Went last evening to Northdown, a small but pretty village. There are some sweet green lanes, which show the ocean at the end of them; it has a beautiful effect. The cottages are neat, and the gardens indicate industry and comfort. But there is no Sunday-school! The villagers were amusing themselves with rural sports: and it delighted me to see so many youths blooming with health and gayety, and engaged in healthful recreations. I could not fail, however, to be deeply affected, that they were destitute of all instruction. I offered one a tract; he said, 'I cannot read.' I offered it to another; but instead of accepting it, he pointed to a third lad, who, it was understood, could read it. How is it that Christians can let all these poor villagers grow up and live in ignorance!"

"*Nine o'clock.* Just returned from Deal.—When upon the swelling ocean in a little boat, what helpless creatures we seem! I thought I understood more than ever the force of that beautiful expression, 'He holdeth the waters in the hollow of his hand.' But after the sacred writers have employed the boldest figures, and we have formed the noblest conceptions of which we are capable, how very short they fall of what they ere long shall be! When the spirit is relieved of its encumbrances, it will possess in a moment more consistent views of the divine Majesty than in all the efforts of this mortal life!

"Went this evening to meet Miss P. at St. Peter's. Walked about the churchyard, and thought on that solemn period which my own feelings, and the ground over which I was treading, united to bring to my remembrance."

"My appetite is more than good, and this evening I feel uncommonly well. I walked to Northdown. The fields we passed through seem to invite the husbandman to reap the fruits of his labour, and in some places he has accepted the invitation. When last in the country I saw them sowing the seed. How very soon will the great harvest come! Who can view such scenes as these, and not raise the eye of gratitude to that Being who fills the mouths of his creatures with food, and their hearts with gladness! O how insensible is man!—how insensible am I! Awake, my soul, and bless Him who sends his early and latter rain, and causes his sun to shine on the earth. Remember, too, that these blessings are conferred on sinners; and that if God so care for the body of his unworthy creatures, he will much more grant to our prayers all spiritual mercies!"

"I hope in spending a few moments with you to compose my mind. I received a letter to-day containing unpleasant news; I afterward read a portion of history which painfully affected me; and just as I laid down my book, a trifling circumstance arose which hurt me. O for that meekness which is of great price! How often a trifle reveals to us much of ourselves! My feelings need constantly to be controlled. This I consider my weakest part; they too often sway my judgment, when my judgment ought to sway them. This lays me open to many snares. It is something to discover where we are most likely to be surprised by the enemy; but this is of little use, except we take care to keep those passes well guarded. Let us, my dear, *study ourselves*; this will afford us fresh matter for prayer. Especially let us look to the Strong for strength on the *first rise* of an improper feeling, and cease not to crave his Holy Spirit to subdue every thing that is contrary to the divine image."

"After tea we walked to Pagwell Bay. There is a very extensive opening both by sea and land. The valleys, the hills, the waters, rejoiced together. I was so delighted with the beauty of this scenery, gilded with the setting sun, that I could scarcely take my eyes from it; but it was soon hidden by the shades of night. If this world is so lovely, what must the next be! And if the next is so glorious, what must the Creator be!

'These are thy works, Parent of good,
Almighty! thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair—Thyself how wondrous then!'

"It is the contemplation of this wondrous and infinite Being which will be the employment of a future state. Let us, then, habituate ourselves to the exercise; and that our weak sight may not be oppressed by the majesty of the object, let us behold it in the face of Jesus Christ.

"The quietness and leisure I now enjoy are calculated to promote my self-knowledge and mental improvement. I am bending all my attention to history; it is a profitable study. How astonishing it is that young persons should be tempted to waste their time in useless accomplishments, and often in vulgar decorations of the body, and entirely neglect the cultivation of the mind, not to say the salvation of the soul.

"I have only a day or two longer to stay. It is natural to ask, What good have I done since I came here? I wish I could return a proper answer to this question. I am very anxious to return, under the blessing of Jehovah, that I may prove a blessing to my family and the church of God. *I must make up lost time.* Soon the scene of action will be past. O that I could always act for eternity! The very colour of my apparel teaches me not to depend on earth, and yet I am always prone to do it."

The remainder of this year passed away without any occurrence of importance, except the change of family residence. Her parents, after long, industrious, and honourable exertions in their secular engagements, were

induced to seek the comforts of retirement for their advancing years. Providence had kindly put the means of realizing their desires within their power; and they now determined to use them.

Nothing could more fully accord with Martha's wishes, as far as her parents were concerned. She had seen, and with no careless eye, the labours they had endured, the sacrifices they had made, for their beloved family; and she was far from willing that these should be unnecessarily continued, for the sake of accumulating superfluous gains. One of the simplest and strongest wishes of her heart was to see them enjoy the fruit of their exertions, exchanging worldly bustle for peaceful content, bodily fatigue for quiet repose, and earthly care for the calm anticipation of a heavenly state. Her parents were quickened in their steps by the affectionate desires of their children; and, before the autumn expired, they removed to a comfortable habitation on Bethnal Green.

Light and shade are mingled in every scene of life. Delightful as this arrangement was to Martha's filial affections, it was attended by regret, for it involved a separation of the family. Her brother could not be included in it. It gave her deep concern to be put at a comparative distance from one whom she now knew so intimately, and around whom her fondest reliances were clustering. However, we were not unmindful of the privilege already enjoyed in the three happy years we had spent beneath the same roof; and our present separation was of such a nature as not to forbid our seeing more or less of each other most days of every week.

CHAPTER XVI.

DOING GOOD. 1815–1817.

In the spring of one thousand eight hundred and fifteen, Martha's complaints assumed new and threatening appearances. During three months she passed through a course of medicine, and sought afterward to confirm the benefit she had received from it, by spending some weeks at Frampton, in Gloucestershire. To this place she had been invited by some young and valued friends, who had recently removed to it from our congregation in London.

On this visit, therefore, she separated from her connections with less than her usual reluctance, and was received with most open-hearted kindness. Her friends, who welcomed her to their habitation, introduced her to a most pleasing circle of Christian society, in which she found, and assisted to communicate, real happiness. In the company of some of them she saw much of the beauties of this fine and picturesque county; and what from her delight in the scenery she was daily tempted to explore, what from the congeniality of the intercourse with which she was privileged, and what from the genuine sympathy everywhere shown towards her, which on a spirit tender and generous as hers always works medicinally, her languor and her pains subsided, and her countenance became again florid with health. Martha often referred to this visit with pleasure and gratitude. It had not only enlarged the sphere of enjoyment, and brought her into acquaintance with several excellent Christians and ministers; it had given rise to some close and valuable friendships, which she afterward cherished by correspondence.

Soon after her return from Gloucestershire, Martha

became the superintendent of a domestic establishment on which I was then just entering. We were thus brought, for a period, to dwell again in one habitation; and the six months so spent stand out to my sight like the little verdant spots which occasionally meet us by the wayside, on the otherwise worn and dusty path of life.

The greater part of this time her brother was the subject of indisposition, and Martha had an opportunity for showing those small and manifold attentions which contribute so powerfully to endear the members of relative life to each other. The many arrangements necessary on the settlement of a little household were made without disturbance. She did every thing to relieve me as much as possible from the burden of pastoral duty, and uniformly sought to report something that might gratify, while she withheld the trifles that might irritate. So much was this her practice, that her very presence seemed to be the herald of some good tidings, and to operate as a charm in dissipating the melancholy which too frequently attends a state of nervous excitation. No one ever studied another more than she studied her brother; no one, in doing this, ever more completely forgot herself.

Her attentions, too, were as delicate as they were assiduous. She knew when to act, when to be still. She entered by the power of sympathy into the case of the sufferer; every want was commonly anticipated, every desire generally known without the intervention of speech. How often of an evening, in seeking rest from labour discharged under pain and weakness, on the sofa, have I traced the variations of my own feeling in her faithful and varying countenance; and how often, when she was conscious of it, have I seen them in a moment suppressed, and her features lighted up with a soft benevolence, which spoke only of the gentlest love! It is particularly touching, too, in going over her papers, to find, that while her sympathy was so quiet and silent in my society, it was enabled to be so by the frequent utterance of the most tender desires and prayers in her

closet. Would that I could record her excellence and my gratitude in a less perishable form!

Affliction is often as beneficial to social as to Christian life. It gives simplicity to the character, levels the differences of mind and situation, and facilitates the mutual flow of affection. This alone seemed to be necessary to make Martha's attachment to her brother as strong and perfect as human nature can be conceived to exercise. Accustomed as she was to think most lowly of herself, and to estimate her brother much too highly, affliction appeared needful to place us more on an equality in her partial opinion. Under such visitations she was constrained to perceive that she could really be of service to one whom she was disposed to think of as only serving her. Affliction made him more sensibly dependant on her. Her hand could supply his wants, could lighten his burdens, could direct his affairs; and that arm on which she was habituated to lean could be well content in seeking support from hers. How tenderly would she press it to her side, and give it more relief than it sought! In such circumstances, her love was invigorated by her pity; the currents of mutual sympathy were put more completely on a level, and they flowed into each other more readily and yet more peacefully. These occasional sufferings are brightened in the recollection that they brought us nearer together, and gave me a yet larger share in my sister's heart than I might otherwise have possessed.

With a strong affection, the poisonous plants of jealousy often grow up. But there was nothing *exclusive* in Martha's attachments; had there been, it would have been detected at this period. I was now anticipating a relationship which would necessarily interfere with the situation she was so pleased to hold in my family, and which she might be tempted to conclude would greatly affect even her place in my heart. Such a trial as this has often been found too powerful for the mother, the sister, or the friend, whose devotedness could have overcome every other. On this hazardous ground, however,

Martha stood as a conqueror, and without a conflict. There was no meanness, no selfishness in her love. She simply desired the object of it to possess the utmost possible degree of happiness, without making it a condition that she must be either its source or its medium. She knew that her brother would still have all the happiness which his sister could impart, and she looked at a more intimate connection as multiplying the means of securing to him a full and overflowing cup of gladness.

Her sister, therefore, was received with expanded arms. She freely conferred with her on the requisite arrangements, and made every possible preparation for her comfort on becoming a member of the family. She gave her at once the place to which she considered her entitled in her thoughts and attentions. She facilitated her introduction to our connections; and she did every thing that presence of mind and delicacy of feeling could suggest, to remove the awkwardness arising from a sudden entrance on untried relationships and novel society. Her sister retains the most grateful impressions of this early and disinterested kindness; and I should not do justice to the subject, did I not take occasion to couple her expression of them with my own. Such, indeed, is the temper in which a young person, content, for one she loves, to leave her beloved and familiar home, and to dwell with strangers, should ever be received. But, for the want of this, how often are those events which we denominate a union of families, the prolific root of corroding jealousies, bitter contentions, and chilling antipathies.

In the years sixteen and seventeen, Martha's duties and pleasures in town were several times interrupted by the state of her health. With two or three exceptions, she retired to Cheshunt, a place already pleasing to her by many remembrances. Her young friend had, indeed, left the neighbourhood; but many persons were familiar to her, and especially a widow, with whom she took up her quiet residence. This worthy woman had seen better and worse days than those which were now passing over her. She had walked in the sunshine, and contended

with the storm; and she now sought only an humble shelter from life's changes, that she might peacefully pass the remaining months of her pilgrimage in waiting for the consolation of Israel. With such a person Martha's spirit was completely at home. A most sincere friendship grew up between them; and her friend, in the very loneliness of her widowhood, learned to rejoice afresh in the Goodness which had directed to her an individual who was even as a daughter.

In the visits of this period Martha possessed a more equal and happy state of mind than formerly, and she determined to enter on more vigorous plans of doing good. Freed from the usual claims on her time, she gave a limited portion of it to her own edification, and the large remainder to continuous efforts for benefiting others. Parts of every day in each week, and frequently the whole day, were consecrated to these exertions; the objects of them may be best explained in the following memoranda, which I find written in the commencement of her pocket-book for the year sixteen:—

"*Prayer—Distribution of tracts—Conversation—Instruction of the young—Visitation of the poor.*"

The efficacy of means of usefulness depends, not on their imposing and expensive character, but on their skilful and earnest application. These simple means were employed by Martha zealously and effectually. She knew not the restraints which she necessarily felt in the metropolis. The cottagers she visited were generally known in their neighbourhood; and she could commonly learn enough to direct her conduct. The father of the family was usually absent, and the mother and children were at home; to these she could easily win her way, by the most unassuming and sympathetic manners; and the impressions of her presence and lessons were, in most cases, so successful, as to induce them to beg a repetition of the kindness.

The limits of these efforts were only bounded by strength and time, and scarcely by these. She laid the whole surrounding country under this moral cultivation, beginning nearer home, and so passing outward, to the

utmost line of labour. I have found private minutes, in the same little pocket-book, of the division of her labours. They occur as follows:—

"Cheshunt—Waltham—The Common—Berkhamstead —Newgate-street—Wormley;" allowing one place to a day, or part of a day.

The following are courses for the entire day:— "Wormley West End—Over the Common—Easingham —Bayfield, &c.—Home through Hertford."

"To Enfield over the Common."

"Take the road through Nasing to Epping."

"To Hatfield by Northaw—Hadley."

When the apostle Paul says he preached the Gospel "from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum," it is impossible to judge of the extent of his labours without a reference to the map; nor can these Christian visits to the poor be appreciated without an allusion to the relative distances of the places. And when it is stated that the nearer ones embrace a circuit of from six to eight miles, and the farther ones a circuit of fourteen, eighteen, twenty, and even two-and-twenty miles from the point of residence, it will, undoubtedly, create a sentiment of astonishment. I confess I had never known that a female, in such circumstances, solitary, feeble, contending with a high degree of bodily suffering, and without any facilities to her exertions, could ever have ventured on them with perseverance, had they not been actually accomplished in the life of my sister.

If any are anxious clearly to mark the springs of action, where the act itself is so sustained and powerful, I am happy in being able to assist the inquiry. I find in the same pocket-book, and at the foot of these circuits, as if to keep them under the eye whenever the effort was to be made, the following minutes:—

"*A soul is of infinitely more value than a world! Think not, then, that any effort for its salvation is too difficult to be attempted!*"

"*The glory of Jehovah should be your* CONSTANT, *your* ONLY *aim!*"

Thus it may be seen, that her motives were as simple

as her means, and it was their simplicity which constituted their power and their glory.

After this elucidation of motive, it may yet be desirable to ascertain how Martha economized so small a portion of bodily strength as she possessed, to endure such lengthened and apparently severe exercises.

Whenever she was about to visit a more distant neighbourhood, she devoted the whole day to the object. After taking an early breakfast, and particularly imploring a divine blessing on the engagements of the day, she quitted her dwelling, usually with a reticule in her hand, in which were commonly deposited a hard-boiled egg, a pencil and paper, her Testament, and a good assortment of tracts. She started in a slow pace, and, in reaching the farthest point of destination, she relieved herself by many rests and calls. She considered that the moment she entered on her walk her work began; and her eye was eagerly in search of some object which she might assist to make wiser and happier. If any little incident gave her favourable access to an individual or a cottage, she embraced the present opportunity without scruple. She could never think that cottage out of the way, or that time lost, in which she was endeavouring to do good.

When she arrived more immediately in the scene of the day's exertions, if visiting the neighbourhood for the first time, she generally made her way to some worthy person, of whom she had learned a few particulars, or to some one dwelling which appeared more inviting than the rest, and sought "a cup of cold water." For this she returned a trifling acknowledgment, and this disposed the individual to more kindly conversation. After regarding the claims of the inhabitants here, she sought some information of those in the vicinity, and thus procured a key to most of the surrounding dwellings. She now proceeded in her course, entering every cottage where she found a welcome, in the spirit of the primitive disciples, breathing peace around her, and bequeathing it as a sacred legacy behind her.

Having passed through her work here, she turned her face homeward, making the same pauses on her road,

seldom caring to reach her habitation till the day began to close. It was solely by these alternations of repose and progress, that Martha, with little strength and slight refreshments, was enabled to travel over so large a portion of ground as must, without explanation, approach to the incredible.

On one of these exploring excursions, following the current incidents of the morning, she arrived at a place called Newgate-street. The name which describes it, however, is not likely to suggest a just idea of it. It is a small hamlet, resting on the verdant bosom of a gentle eminence, which springs from the surrounding pastures. The cottages fringe the edges of this somewhat circular elevation, without assuming any thing of a set and artificial appearance. They are detached and diversified in form and position; yet all are simple and chaste. Their base is relieved by the aspiring flowers, and their soft brown roofs half hidden in the overhanging and nodding foliage. The eye is carried to them by "the merry green," which, animated with rustic figures, forms a beautiful foreground; while pretty vistas are often breaking on the sight between the cottages, revealing the descending glade, softened by shadows, and bounded by swelling hills crowned with wood, and basking in the warm and blessed light of heaven. There is a completeness about this humble spot which satisfies the eye; there is a freshness which invigorates the taste; there is a quietude which sooths the soul. It speaks of separation from the world; of ignorance of the hackneyed ways of life; and exemption from its vices and its snares. And of how many spots in our picturesque and happy land may all this, and more than this, be said!

Martha, coming unexpectedly on this scene, fed on it with a relish which ever afterward made it sweet to her memory; but no illusions of taste could induce her to conclude that the inhabitants were as pure and as happy as their situation suggested. She knew that man, in his best estate, is still ignorant, vain, and sinful; and here she dreamed of no exception. She made her visits; distributed her counsels and her tracts; and acquainted

herself with their moral condition. She found that these people were five miles from their parish church, and that they had no means of instruction within their reach. That the fathers, from having no employment for their time, acquired the habit of passing most of the Sabbath at the village pot-house; and that this wretched habit had opened the entrance to others, injurious to their character and the comfort of their families. The mothers, indeed, remained true to their domestic duties; but neither father nor mother nor child had the attention directed, from year to year, to any thing beyond life's transitory concerns. Yet many expressed a concern to observe the worship of the Sabbath, if the means were within their power; and were desirous that their children should receive a better education than had been granted to themselves.

This information affected Martha most deeply. Here were a people surrounded with the light of truth, and yet sitting in darkness; in the midst of a Christian land, and yet without a school, without a sanctuary, without any one to care for their soul; living like the brute in their pastures, alive only to sensitive enjoyment, and dying also like the brute, as ignorantly, though not as safe. The external signs of their happiness only rendered their spiritual wretchedness the more deplorable. Martha looked on the lovely spot as her Saviour looked on the outward magnificence of Jerusalem, and wept; and her sympathy settled down into a resolution often to visit this place, particularly to notice it in her prayers, and to use her best efforts to put its inhabitants nearer the means of religious improvement.

The days spent in these benevolent exercises were, in the review, some of the most pleasant and important of her life. It is little to say that she never met with insult or molestation of any kind; she seldom met with neglect; and, in most cases, she was received with undissembled gratitude and kindness. As she became known in some of her favourite circuits, she would be welcomed on her way by smiling faces and simple courtesies; groups of happy children would often be gathered round her resting-place, reposing

on her knee, and hanging on her lips, attracted by her winsome manners and tempting rewards; and, though far from seeking such offerings, the thankful tear would sometimes fall in her presence, and the blessing that would not be refused an utterance would sometimes descend on her head. The benevolence of her errand called into play the kindliest parts of human character; she communed with her kindred on the best of terms; she walked in the warm glow of human sympathy; and she frequently saw some fine illustrations of what is most lovely and generous in our nature.

Her intercourse with others, on these occasions, was necessarily varied by intervals of solitude; and these variations increased the sentiment of gratification. In society she sought to serve God; in solitude to worship him; in both to enjoy him. If, in her rural and retired paths, rest became needful, she sought it in some imbowered nook, where no eye could obtrude upon her, and where nature spread before her some picture of living beauty. The eye affected the heart, and both arose from nature and from man, to claim a relation to the skies. In these scenes Martha drank deeply of those perennial springs which the hand of God has opened for us on the fair bosom of creation; and deeper still of those waters of life which flow fast by the throne of God, and of which, if a man drink, he shall live for ever.

Indeed, Martha had never possessed so much Christian enjoyment as at this period, and particularly in these exercises. Her mind had recovered its tranquillity. Soothed by the quiet of nature, the strings of life, which affliction had shattered, were restored to order and melody. Surrounded by the works of God, they were readily dwelt upon as the dear symbols of a present Deity. And fresh from considerable labours of love and self-denial, they became, unconsciously, the witnesses of the principles from which they came. Doubt and darkness fled away, and the spirit rose nearer to its Maker in filial confidence, and breathed forth desires of love and hope unutterable!

CHAPTER XVII.

VICISSITUDES. 1818.

THE winter of one thousand eight hundred and eighteen Martha spent in town, and principally with me. She maintained, through this period, her average state of health, but was subject to a great deal of local uneasiness and acute pain. She now found in our family an infant relative; and the interest she took in him contributed, as much as any thing could, to make her forget her suffering. She was particularly fond of this child, and could never do enough for it; indeed, the difficulty was to prevent her using such exertions for its amusement as might have done her real injury. I have frequently seen, in her attempts to divert and please it, the expressions of deep anguish and winning kindness pass in quick succession over her features—the affecting representatives of bodily distress, and of an affection which was far above its control.

Recently introduced into the relationship of parents, we were, at this time, beginning a course of reading on education, and we made it the subject of conversation and remark. In this study Martha took as earnest a share as we could possibly do. Education of the young was one of her favourite subjects. She had derived many just views on it from experience, and many from *desultory* reading; but she felt it had not received that attention which its merits and her attachment claimed for it. She was now delighted with the opportunity, and we entered on it with the more vigour, because we had a beloved companion who would take so animated a part in it. Discussion often arose in our progress, and it was always welcomed, for it frequently elicited truth, and never ended in a serious difference of opinion. These exercises were

among our pleasant recollections. There was a freshness of feeling about them; the study itself was a most inviting one to us all; and the dear babe, which was usually seated on our knee, or reposing in his bassinett, was a living and common motive to its pursuit.

It is natural to conclude that Martha, restored to her religious connections, resumed, as she was able, all her benevolent engagements; but, it is needful to remark, that they were resumed with *more vivid perceptions of their importance*. There was less anxiety of feeling, and more earnestness. Indeed, there was an *intentness* of mind to one great object that was truly impressive. In her intercourse with her scholars, her young companions, the sick and the aged, and the congregation generally, there was something in her manner which seemed to say, "I have but one thing to do, and I must do it with all my might." I could not feel so much at liberty as I had been in restraining her from too free a use of a life so precious to us, though a look was sufficient for it. She commonly acquiesced either with a word or with an affectionate salute; but there was a quiet expression of surprise and distress on her countenance, which was wonderfully affecting; it often called to my mind the Saviour's reply to his relatives, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

The shortest life, on virtue's scale, is frequently the longest. Those who anticipate many years to come, live accordingly; and those who, by inward warnings, are made to feel that they are the "poor pensioners on an hour," are anxious to improve the present hour, and to "die daily." I do not know that Martha was, at this period, acting under any peculiar monitions of her mortality, by which many profess to have been influenced; but I do know that her habitual frailties had established an abiding sense of life's uncertainty, and that her thoughts had been so familiarized to eternity, as to make the longest life and the most devoted exertion nothing in the comparison—sentiments of infinitely more importance, as they cannot deceive us, and are of universal application.

It is not our actions, so much as the spirit of them, which influences others. Martha's present temper of mind did not fail to communicate itself, more or less, to those around her. It was a season in which her labours, though discharged in weakness, and sometimes in tears, were highly beneficial. Meanwhile, the good seed she had been previously sowing was here and there springing up in answer to her manifold prayers. Many of her children, who had gone into the world, were supporting their situations with credit, and fondly acknowledging their obligations to her. Some of them had risen up to become teachers in the school, and took their places at her side, around the table of Christian fellowship. Some of her young companions, who, in the novelty and ardour of their first emotions, had showed a little unsteadiness, had sobered down into the consistency of the Christian walk; and all of them were concerned to seize opportunities, the more precious because occasional and precarious, of returning her esteem and kindness for all her love. It is impossible to say how these rewards of hopeful exertion rejoiced her heart; and it would be needless to show that they gave a stronger determination to her chosen course of beneficence.

As the summer advanced, Martha received renewed invitations from her Gloucestershire friends to give a portion of it to them. Her relations seconded their cordial solicitations; but as some domestic circumstances seemed to call for her attendance in town, she was disposed to postpone them. Her reluctance, however, was finally overcome; and that she might separate from her connections with as little of painful feeling as possible, I engaged, on my way from Herefordshire, which I was about to visit, to spend some days with her at Frampton.

This promise gave her great pleasure, but it was never to be fulfilled. While I was in Herefordshire, I received tidings of the death of our second child, an infant of a few weeks old; and, of course, my remaining engagements were set aside, and I sought to return by the most direct line to London. Martha's affectionate heart could not allow her brother in affliction to pass within twenty

miles of her without an effort to see him. She knew that I must go through Gloucester, and that I must change carriages, and that probably the exchange could not be effected without some short detention. She therefore induced a friend to drive her over, that she might take the chance of a meeting. Amid the bustle and excitement of hasty travelling, I arrived at the expected inn, and was anxiously inquiring for my next conveyance. A friend's hand seized me. I followed its leading into an adjoining little parlour, and my sister was instantly in my arms. My wants had been thought of, and refreshments were nicely prepared ready to my hand; we exchanged a few words, but spoke not of the event which was nearest our thoughts; she covered my hand with her kisses and her tears; and again I was a solitary stranger in the corner of a stage-coach. Few things that are traced on my imagination have so much the air of a vision as this; it came and it went so suddenly!

Martha returned to her friends, and continued, at my earnest request, the proposed time. The visit was one of mutual enjoyment. Every the kindest attention was shown to her, from the esteem and love cherished towards her character. Her health derived advantage from taking considerable exercise on horseback. Her mornings were commonly spent in visiting some of her favourite points of view, and calling on some Christian friends; and her evenings, if not spent in the house of God, were as often given to a select few, who were delighted to meet with a kindred spirit, with whom they might take sweet counsel on the way they had already trodden, and on the delectable prospects of a "better country," which occasionally rose to their sight, on the utmost boundary of their mortal pilgrimage.

Our regrets are proportioned to our enjoyments. The time of separation arrived; and the pleasures Martha had found in visiting the cottages of the poor, rambling among the beauties of nature, and mixing with congenial society, caused her to meet it with considerable emotion. She took her farewell of the endeared objects of the place and its vicinity under the impression that probably she

might see them no more, and her mind was softened into affectionate tenderness. Similar sentiments were awakened in the bosom of her friends; and the parting scene became mutually, and therefore deeply, affecting. Few events have received so much notice from her pen as this; and what she has written powerfully testifies to the overflowings of a heart beneficially influenced by communion with nature, grateful for the least expression of human friendship, and springing from the touch of earthly sorrow, to pour out the incense of piety at the gate of heaven. I regret that, in justice to her memory, these pieces cannot be introduced, as, though so illustrative of her state of mind, they are but fragments, and are written in measure without the slightest correction.

When Martha reached her home, we congratulated her and ourselves on her appearance. But how often are appearances deceitful! While her general health had been decidedly improved, her insidious disease was establishing its possession; and in the close of the autumn it broke out with alarming force, and baffled resistance by the most complicated symptoms. The best advice was again procured; strong means were immediately applied; and once more she was ordered from town.

Once more, therefore, Martha prepared to leave her family, and to retire to Cheshunt. The step had often been taken before, but never with so much sadness of heart. On the day of her departure, we all assembled to dine; it was an anxious and unwelcome meal. We spoke comforts to each other; but they were comforts on which we ourselves were not feeding. Our silence and sympathy indicated a state of serious apprehension; and when we parted, it was in tears, extorted by the fear that the place which then knew us might know us no more. The fear was too truly founded—Martha was quitting London never to return.

I cannot now record an occurrence which to me, perhaps, was one of the most serious in my sister's life, without giving expression to the feeling it excites. It was this event that virtually broke all the ties which held her to my religious connection and pastoral charge;

and never pastor suffered the loss of a more admirable and devoted member. In this capacity she never gave me a moment's uneasiness, but contributed essentially to my joy and usefulness. She was considerate of her minister's peace of mind, in the least as well as the most important things, and was concerned habitually that, as the member of a religious body, the whole of her conduct might be exemplary. How far she assisted to promote the peace and prosperity of my charge, must be revealed by the light of a brighter day; enough, for the present, it is to know, that to me she was raised up by the hand of Providence as a most opportune and valuable blessing. She was the companion of my way when otherwise it would have been solitary; and she contributed greatly in the outset of public life to moderate the weight of those cares and duties which pressed the more heavily on a breast as yet unaccustomed to the yoke. However, her work was now done! I was no more to be cheered by her presence, or relieved by her exertions; and I beheld her go forth as a sufferer, quiet and patient indeed, but still as a sufferer, and an exile from her dearest scenes of usefulness, and from the society of her friends and kindred.

If this separation was painful to all parties, it was most so to Martha. Her bodily spirits were reduced by exhausting medicines and constant pain; and her imagination would dwell upon it as a final removal from the habitation of those she loved. And when she was actually seated by the lone fireside of the kind widow, and her mind was at liberty for reflection, she had difficulty in sustaining its exercises with fortitude. She thought of her parents, whom she wished to comfort; of her brother, whose protection she needed; of her companions, whom she desired to enjoy; of her children, whom she was accustomed to edify; of the house of God and the people of God, familiar to her by a thousand prayers, and endeared by a thousand enjoyments; all distant from her, and if not far distant, yet so distant as to interrupt a communion which might never be restored;—her heart filled with sorrow; and her eyes frequently overflowed with involuntary tears.

Her situation at Cheshunt, too, which had so often administered to her comfort, increased her distress. Many a time she had come hither as an invalid, but never such an invalid as now. Her present state of health confined her to the dwelling; and her day of suffering knew few changes beyond a passage from the chair to the bed, and the bed to the chair. Her former and her existing indisposition were put in comparison, and she now felt herself to be sensibly worse. She was in the centre of a delightful field of labour, and yet could not lift a hand for its cultivation. Her eye glanced on many familiar walks where her feelings had often been soothed and her thoughts exalted, and which were still inviting her abroad; but she had no strength to obey their bidding. They gave to her situation the sense of imprisonment, and to her life the air of uselessness. These were some of the first calls Martha received from a state of active to a state of passive devotedness; and, in this hour of trial, it is not strange if they were not duly estimated, even while they were meekly obeyed.

The east wind is stayed in the day of the south wind. After a few days, Martha's sense of separation and sorrow was mitigated by the arrival of Miss Maria ———. This young friend had been associated from the first with her in her benevolent exertions; and now that Martha was obliged to quit them, she generously determined on becoming the companion of her solitude and confinement; a determination which she had ascertained to be most acceptable to her and to her relatives.

Martha received her friend as a gift from a superior Hand, mercifully bestowed in the time of need; and her presence had the most favourable influence on her spirits. She had now an individual by her side of her own sex, of similar age and sentiments, who watched over her by night and day, who conversed with her of the persons and scenes from which she was separated, and who, in the ardour of attachment, was cheerfully submitting to those separations and that confinement which Martha's tender spirit had so much lamented. Such an exercise of unassuming and disinterested kindness could not be

lost on her; it touched every chord in her heart. She admired these proofs of character in her friend; she gratefully admired the Providence that had thus unexpectedly appeared for her; and she was disposed to charge herself with selfishness and unbelief in the regrets which she had indulged. The succeeding extracts from her diary, connected with the close of this year and the opening of another, will reveal something of those subsiding agitations which these trying changes had produced; and still more of that steady ascent of the spirit to its Maker which no earthly trouble could repress.

"*November* 27, 1818. This is the first time I have been absent from my family on this memorable day.* O that I may be with them and with the church in spirit, though not in body! What mercies have I received in connection with them! Would that they constrained me to live only to the Author of them! This evening Maria and I spend together in prayer. May we be inclined to ask for all those blessings which are requisite for our beloved pastor, the church under his care, and our own souls!"

"How profitable and how necessary is self-examination, and yet how often do I neglect this duty, or, at least, perform it in a very superficial manner. This morning I have been asking the question, 'What lack I yet?'—In the closet I have to lament much formality; the absence of the wrestling spirit, which ought to characterize every devotional exercise. In the sanctuary I am in danger of becoming lukewarm and indifferent, partly because bodily infirmity often prevents me rightly attending its sacred duties, and partly from * * * *. In the family, I lack benevolence of feeling; and I much fear, through the depravity of my nature, growing more selfish, instead of benevolent, by affliction. O that this may not be the case! but may self in every form be entirely and for ever forgotten. Be pleased, Lord, to make all thy providences and ordinances the means of

* The anniversary of her brother's birth and ordination, the evening of which is observed by special prayer in the congregation.

exterminating selfish dispositions, and of strengthening and increasing exceedingly all the graces of thy Spirit; that so thy servant may no more live to herself, but be *altogether devoted unto Thee. Amen.*"

"*January*, 1819. My motto for this year is, 'Fear not, neither be discouraged; for I, the Lord thy God, am with thee in all places whither thou goest.' May this encouraging portion of Scripture strengthen my faith, and enable me everywhere and always to trust and rejoice in the Lord! Remember me, O Lord, for good. Teach thy servant cheerfully to acquiesce in *all* thy will, and live *entirely* to thy glory.

"Here would I erect another Ebenezer; for though I was brought low, the Lord helped me. I have been quite confined for some weeks with a violent attack of illness, but am now able to walk a little. During the severe pain I suffered, my spirit was not permitted to sink; but according to my day so was my strength. O that I could be grateful for all the mercy manifested to me! But, alas! my mind is often clouded by dark and distressing views of the Divine conduct; yet I know they shall not remain for ever. When I am humbled, the light shall arise. To-morrow I hope to celebrate the Redeemer's dying love. May I do it under the peculiar influences of his Spirit. May he vouchsafe to take away the heart of stone, and give the heart of flesh. Afresh would I devote myself to the Most High. May the offering be accepted, and may he employ me in his service evermore!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

BENEVOLENT EXERTIONS. 1819.

With such serious purposes of self-devotement, it will hardly be expected that Martha, even in her present circumstances, should continue long without some efforts of usefulness. So far from it, that in the midst of her affliction she was devising means of accomplishing her best desires; and as her pains were alleviated, she arose to put them in execution.

Her recovery, however, was of so very partial a kind, that it left her hopeless of entering again on those extensive plans in this neighbourhood which had formerly blended so much personal gratification with the endeavour to do good. But these were the more readily given up at the call of Providence, as it would supply her with an occasion to practise self-denial; an exercise she thought herself backward to perform, but one which few have been enabled to perform so readily or so extensively.

Yet, accustomed as she had been to move in a larger circle, she calculated little on the result of her present confined and crippled exertions. Duty she had taught herself to consider was hers, events were God's; she determined cheerfully to do what she could, commending her feeble service to Him who can command success. And the issue furnished her with an important lesson; that God, in the very act of weakening our energies and limiting our labours, is designing to make them effectual. The fact is, that such feebleness of effort is often overruled to give *better dispositions* to what we do; and, after all, it is the disposition at which God looks, and by which the human heart is influenced.

Martha's first attention was directed to the children

she had been accustomed to instruct; and, as she could not now go to them, she invited those who were sufficiently near to come to her. This invitation was so well received, that she was quickly surrounded by a class as large as she could manage advantageously. She gave her instructions to these children once or twice in the week, and generally sought to do it in the absence of any witness. She felt with Mr. Cecil, that, to be at liberty in talking with children, we must talk to them alone. It is, perhaps, sufficient commendation of the method she adopted to say, that, although the attention of her little pupils was chiefly employed on religious subjects, they always came to her lessons with punctuality and eagerness.

Through the children she still had access to their parents; and that she might make the best use of this, she formed a little library of well-chosen books, illustrative of domestic temper and economy, as well as of divine truth; and by lending these books as rewards to her scholars, she kept them circulating in their families, with the strongest inducements to regard their contents. Frequently the book so lent was, to express the sense of gratitude, returned not by the child, but by the mother, who would enlarge in simple language on the parts which had interested her thoughts. When this effect followed the arrangement, Martha deemed it quite successful; it gave her an opportunity of intercourse which she knew how to improve, and which the poor are generally willing to embrace, when they are treated respectfully, and they can discover a friendly concern for their happiness.

As her strength permitted, Martha went abroad into the hamlet; and sometimes, with the help of Maria's arm, beyond it; to try, as she used to say, "to do some good." Her difficulty in walking made a seat often necessary to her; and she was now so well known and so much beloved in the vicinity of her dwelling, that every cottage-door was open for her relief. Her affliction, therefore, which limited her exertions, gave her more free access to the neighbourhood, and imparted

more weight to her conversations. Those who were the witnesses of her sufferings could not avoid being impressed with her uniform cheerfulness, and her readiness to think little of her own ease in seeking their good and that of their children.

The force of these impressions would sometimes discover themselves in the most simple, and therefore affecting manner. If indisposition, or the weather, had confined Martha for an unusual time, it would assemble a little levee of kind inquirers. The latch of the door would be gently raised during intervals of the morning, and the head of the child, or the matron, or the grandam, would present itself with the inquiry, so as to show a real anxiety to hear of her welfare, and yet to shun any thing like intrusion. In the leisure part of the day she would have to receive some more regular visits from those who, by their age or other circumstance, thought they might claim this privilege. All these worthy villagers would evince, in various ways, their sympathy. One was quite sure, "that while Miss Reed cared so much about others, she did not care enough about herself;" another thought that she would sit much more comfortable in her easy chair than in any other she could possibly have; another imagined that some little nicety she could prepare would just please her palate; and a fourth was certain, that if she would take her favourite medicine, it would soon cure her. And these remarks were seldom allowed to fall to the ground; without shaping them into a promise, or waiting for a formal consent, they were usually followed by some little tribute of kindness beyond what their words had given reason to expect.

These sentiments of sincere esteem prevailed more generally than could be readily supposed. I recollect, somewhat earlier than the period on which I am dwelling, I could not exactly distinguish the house of my sister's residence without inquiry. I went into a small shop in the hamlet to gain information. An elderly woman, of a very notable and good-natured appearance,

was within. I asked her if she knew where Miss Reed lived?

She hesitated; her name was not familiar to her.

"Miss Reed, at Mrs. D——'s?" I continued.

"At Mrs. D——'s! Oh yes, sir, yes, sir; it's the *good young lady* you mean, I dare say, sir."

"Ah, I dare say it is," I replied; "for I know Miss Reed is a *good* young lady."

"Indeed she is, sir!' she said, satisfied now that we were speaking of the same person, "and we all call her so about here."

It was really matter of fact, that Martha's character had identified itself more completely in the minds of these people by some such appellative as this, than by her own proper name.

Nothing is more painful to the truly Christian mind than to find that we may win the affections of others towards ourselves, and yet fail in raising them to divine and uncreated excellence. No one could be further from undervaluing the esteem shown to her than Martha; but she had sought a higher object, and, if this was to be lost, all comparatively would be lost. And it was just here she had reason to fear disappointment. Towards herself, the conduct of these villagers was more than she desired; but towards religion, it was far from giving her satisfaction. There was a willingness to hear her remarks on it, but there was wanting the discovery of it in the spirit and practice as a living principle. They were not at a considerable distance either from church or chapel; and yet it was not easy to prevail on them to attend the worship of God on the Sabbath day; some excuse was always found or invented to satisfy themselves. Her compassionate spirit was stirred within her when she looked round on persons so full of regard to her, and whose hearts were so void of right feeling towards that Being who alone could protect, or help, or bless them.

Martha, however, persevered in her course, and only thought, as the difficulty arose, of opposing to it a stronger

combination of means. She considered, that if she could not prevail on the inhabitants to go to the ordinances of religion, where they were regularly observed, it was necessary, if possible, to bring them to the spot, and not to suffer the people to perish for lack of knowledge. In acting under this conviction, she represented her views so effectually to a minister then staying at Cheshunt, that he at once consented to give his Wednesday evenings to the benefit of this hamlet. Accordingly their sitting-room, with the good-will of the worthy widow, and to the great joy of the young inmates, was determined on as the place of meeting and worship.

It was now that Martha realized more the fruit of her retired endeavours. If she failed generally in urging her neighbours to go some distance for the act of worship, she succeeded beyond expectation in assembling them as was proposed. The awkwardness of first going into a large public assembly, with several other trivial considerations, which greatly influence our nature on very important occasions, were overcome; "they were only going into *widow D——'s*, and those around them were doing the same thing."

When, therefore, the minister arrived at the time of service, the room was well prepared for his reception, and completely filled with attentive hearers, some of whom were so strange to public worship that they knew nothing of its external forms and expressions. The good seed, however, in many cases, was cast in a prepared soil, and it grew up and yielded the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Many were made the better for it in relative life; some were constrained differently to respect the Sabbath, and to travel to the means of grace; and some gave such evidence of a spiritual change as to be readily received to the communion of saints, at the holy supper of their Lord.

In the fluctuation of her sufferings, there would be periods in which Martha was compelled to resign herself to pain; but then it was she was most concerned to excite others to do what was beyond her power. Unmindful of her own convenience, and even of her ne-

cessities, she would urge those who dwelt with her to go forth on some message of mercy. Their desire was to please her; and as they found her mind was much more satisfied by absence on such errands than by any attentions their presence could impart, they commonly met her wishes without remonstrance. Frequently the aged widow was to be seen issuing from her home, happy to fulfil some little suggestion of Martha's for the consolation of others; and more frequently did her attached friend, Maria, follow out her footsteps in her more active days, seeking to confer similar blessings, and to bring home to the invalid some encouraging report.

Our happiness springs from our duty, even when duty wears the aspect of self-denial. These three friends made considerable sacrifices in this course of humble exertion; but they were repaid by unsought rewards. Their work of love gave them something to devise, to arrange, and to converse about. Their separations and meetings gave a zest to their society and intercourse. They had an object before them which endeared them to each other, and kept the best sympathies of the heart alive to the wants of humanity. Above all, there were the substantial proofs of usefulness more or less arising. The good, but retiring widow, entered more into the spirit of active benevolence, and did more than would otherwise have been done; and Maria, catching the views of her friend as she proceeded, sought to accomplish the more from her lamented incapacity. Besides the benefit of her general efforts, a school was formed at a distant hamlet, which Maria undertook to attend once in the week; and Martha, on making known its dark and destitute situation, induced the minister before mentioned to afford it a share in his time and attentions. Thus was Martha, by the kind agency of others, effecting as much through her days of pain and confinement, as could probably have been realized by uninterrupted activity.

From the mere description of these acts of charity, it will be seen that they were not of an expensive character; yet, in continuing them week after week, little

expenses were apt to accumulate. Some of these she was enabled to meet by the kindness of friends, who, knowing her disposition, made her an almoner; and to the remainder she devoted every thing she could possibly spare. Every garment in her drawers, and every sixpence of her allowance, which was not indispensable to her, she readily disposed of to others. I find in a quarter's account of her expenditure about this time, the largest item of the whole is that for "Religious Tracts." She never suffered herself to owe any one any thing but love, but when her dues were settled, she thought of little more. She has frequently made herself penniless to assist others; and there is some great reason to fear, from what I have since learned, that she was too neglectful of the claims of a body rendered so delicate by indisposition. On this subject her friends would seriously remonstrate; she would admit the justice and kindness of what was said, but her inclination would rest on the other side of the argument. "Remember," she would say, "how much good a trifle may do. The gift of some little nicety to a sick person may open the heart to regard what shall be of eternal value to him; and the outlay of a sixpence in tracts may be benefiting others when we are no more." Undoubtedly, compared with what many give, Martha gave nothing; but compared with what they *sacrifice* in giving, and what is *left* after giving, she gave as much as any, and more than most: and this is the scriptural test of charity. The widow's two mites, amid all the silver and gold cast into the treasury that day, was the largest as well as the noblest donation.

If it is to be admitted that Martha did not sufficiently regard her bodily welfare, the concession must end here, for of the superior part of her nature she was never unmindful; and her present situation was considered as a call to increased mental improvement. During this winter, therefore, she pursued a profitable course of reading, and renewed her studies on the subjects which had previously been on hand. Particularly she completed her reading and reflections on education with

growing satisfaction. Maria generally joined her in these engagements, and the pleasure was greatly heightened by the presence of one who was interested in her studies, and whom she could assist to tread the paths she had already trodden.

But with much time to be occupied in one posture, it was desirable to diversify employment; and with the most acute pains to be endured, it was necessary to add to change the attraction of novelty. Indeed, all that could be devised was frequently insufficient to divert the mind from the sense of uncontrollable suffering. Whatever was likely to avail in helping her yet more to forget her afflictions and to occupy her attention and time, she was anxious to adopt. With this purpose she determined, when fatigued with those pursuits which were more arduous and familiar, to turn from them to the French language; and when she should be weary of this, she provided herself with the means for practising drawing. In both these new exercises she made quick progress, and for the latter she formed a strong attachment. Her love of nature gave her an interest in painting; she could use the pencil when she could do nothing else; and she was accustomed to speak of this recreation with gratitude, as contributing to fill up many hours of life appointed to suffering, and which, had she dwelt on it more, she might have been less able with patience to endure.

Her attention, at this period, was given to her *temper* as well as her mind. Her disease affected her nervous system in a high degree; the state of excitation to which she was sometimes brought, was most difficult for her to control: and she has several times expressed a fear that it might, by continued action, render her temper irritable, peevish, and troublesome. She had often marked the influence of bodily infirmity on the social dispositions in other persons, and as often she had deplored it, and prayed against it; but now she thought herself in danger of the very thing she feared. However, her fear was her security; it kept her eyes open on the encroachments of this evil; and resolutely to watch against it was to conquer it.

Martha, indeed, was so inured to resist the selfish principle, that she was the more prepared to contend with it under this one appearance; and so complete was her victory, that no one ignorant of her mind would have thought it had cost her a struggle. She was not only free from peevishness and ill-humour, she was still gentle, kind, and cheerful. She did not undervalue attentions that had become familiar to her, nor use them needlessly where they were kindly offered. She did not withhold acknowledgment because it might be taken for granted; and much less did she manifest impatience and displeasure at services which were meant to please her. She had still a kind word, and as kind a smile for any expression of sympathy, while the whole bodily frame was under the most distressing irritation. The magnitude of this conquest may be estimated when it is considered, that many who have subdued a vicious principle have failed in contending with a petulant disposition.

CHAPTER XIX.

DOMESTIC TRIALS. 1819–20.

While Martha was bearing cheerfully her own sufferings, she was assailed, by relative affliction, in a more vulnerable part. Her parents, who, by the act of retiring from worldly business, appeared to be placed beyond the reach of hazard, were early called to endure a considerable loss. The individual who, with the best reputed character, had entered on their house and trade, soon became a bankrupt, and all they received for the valuable property trusted to his use was an insignificant dividend.

It too often happens, that the first loss leads to a second; in attempting to recover what is past redemption, we lose what is yet possessed. Our parents, anxious to

enlarge a narrowed income, and to provide an opening into life for their younger son, ventured a considerable portion of their remaining property in the house of a sugar refiner. This was done with fair prospects of realizing the proposed objects; but, just at this period, such a stagnation came over this line of otherwise profitable trade, as to perplex and shake the most weighty establishments. In the issue, all the parties concerned lost whatever they had advanced.

No event in our domestic history affected Martha equally with this. She had thought that whatever trials might await their offspring in the course they had to run, her beloved parents would terminate their days at ease and in peace. But now, when she saw their property torn from them so suddenly which they had been years in obtaining, which seemed so necessary to their comfort, and which they could not possibly replace by any renewed exertions, her spirits were overwhelmed. Her imagination exaggerated the distress; and while she did not exactly know the extent of loss, she feared that every thing might be lost, and that her aged and revered parents might be called to suffer most, when the very "grasshopper was becoming a burden." It was then that her affliction was first regarded with temporary impatience; it withheld her hands from administering to their wants, and her feet from fleeing to their presence in their adversity.

However, she communicated with her parents on the subject in the most tender and affectionate manner. She reminded them of those consolations which are apt to be farthest from the thoughts when they are most needed; and meekly suggested those considerations which she had found most useful in lifting the mind above the endless vicissitudes of life. She re-assured them that she was entirely satisfied with what they had done for the welfare of the family; and that they must not take blame to themselves because their plans had been crossed by events which human prudence could not foresee, nor human power control. She made it a distinct and earnest request, that they would not tolerate a mo-

ment's uneasiness concerning herself, as she hoped she should soon be better; and that, under no circumstances, could she allow herself to be burdensome to them, whose burdens she wished, above all earthly things, to lighten. Enough it would be to her, more than enough, should she find that, from the wreck of their possessions, they still retained any thing approaching to a sufficiency for themselves. From their children, she urged, they must now release their thoughts; they had already done their duty towards them.

Martha uttered all this, and much more, in the ardour of her sympathy; and her thoughts were earnestly engaged in considering how she might most readily make herself independent on the very limited resources of her parents. The instruction of children had always been peculiarly her delight; and she conceived her object might be best accomplished by teaching a small and select number of young pupils. Reflection increased her approbation of the plan. She knew the engagement would be pleasant to her; she concluded that her connections would supply the requisite number; and she considered it providential that her attention had been so fully employed on education in its more ornamental and essential parts. There was only one thing which stood in the way of her immediately carrying this scheme into execution—it was the state of her health. She met this difficulty by hoping it would be removed; but this hope had inwardly many fears to contend with. She could not avoid reflecting that she had been unwell for a long period; and that, although now recovering from a heavy paroxysm of pain, disease had rather seemed to establish itself on her constitution than otherwise; and these reflections gave to her plans a visionary and impracticable character. Then, again, was the cup of affliction most bitter to her spirit. It was hard, extremely hard, to see the hand of Providence cutting off the natural sources of supply, and, at the same time, withholding those bodily energies which were necessary, by honourable exertion, to provide for herself—and yet to be resigned!

Hard as it was, Martha was enabled to exemplify it.

But perhaps her own words will best discover the agitation, submission, and gratitude of her heart.

"*June* 2 (her birth-day). Truly, it is a pleasant thing to give thanks unto the Lord! In looking back on the past year, my temporal, intellectual, and spiritual blessings should excite me to joy and praise. Amid all that has threatened my life and my comfort, I am still preserved, and have food to eat, and raiment to put on. Yea, my cup runneth over. Notwithstanding the great hindrances arising from severe pains and oppressive lassitude, I have been favoured with considerable opportunities for mental improvement. But, above all, I would give thanks that I am still preserved in the narrow path —still hungering and thirsting after righteousness—still longing to have the selfishness of my nature extirpated, and to live only to God. May I glorify the Giver of these blessings! When do our benefits appear so valuable as when most conscious of our weakness and unworthiness?

"Let the goodness of God in the past excite *confidence* under present circumstances. What though property should be lost; let me remember that I and mine are in the hands of Infinite Love. What though trials may threaten; let me remember that the hearts and affairs of all are under the control of Jehovah. He knows no difficulty in dispersing the thickest clouds, and causing his sun to shine with more than its usual brightness. O may I trust in Him *with all my heart*, and not be afraid!

"Let this Goodness promote in me *true penitence*. Let me seriously ask, What have I done? What have I neglected? Whom have I forgotten?—May the eternal Spirit work in me a genuine and deep repentance!

"Great God! Hear me, I beseech thee, while I pray, that henceforth I may live as in thy sight, and that a sense of thy presence may keep me from every thing that would offend thee, and cause me to abound in every good word and work. Especially grant that thy glory may be my constant, my only aim; and that I may promote it by pure benevolence, lively spirituality, deep humility, and strong faith. O Lord, I am nothing, and worthy of nothing; but thou art able and willing to do

more for me than I can ask or think. Behold thy servant waits for the fulfilment of her prayers, through the merits of thy dear Son, believing it shall be well with her!"

"*June* 7.—I have received more positive information of the losses my dear parents have sustained; and I fear they may still be found to be greater; but sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. The future seems most gloomy; sorrow attends me which way soever I turn. I would commit my family to the divine care, but it is very difficult. O that I may now honour God by the most steadfast and cheerful reliance on his Providence!

"Sorrow is still with me. I fear Maria and I shall be separated. She has been as Jonah's gourd to me; her incessant kindness has in no small degree mitigated my privations and sufferings. May the Father of the fatherless protect and reward her! This separation is the more painful, because not expected, and it is attended by circumstances very trying to my feelings.—Peace! It is the Lord! He *cannot* err—He *can* make darkness light!"

Previously to the occurrence of these domestic trials, I had been desirous, as Martha was likely to remain at Cheshunt, to provide her with a few more comforts than her present situation could afford; and I now thought that a favourable opportunity was furnished for effecting the change. Influenced by the occasion, and other domestic reasons, I procured a small cottage in her neighbourhood; and having made what arrangements were necessary, I solicited my sister to enter upon it, and to gratify me by undertaking its management.

To her every request of her brother's was acceptable; and this was especially so. It gave her concern to quit the humble roof of her widowed friend; but this was alleviated by the distance between them still being very trifling. Every thing else was as she could desire. She saw that the proposed plan would continue at her side her affectionate companion, Maria; that it would give opportunities of receiving her parents, who were already preparing to spend some time with her; and that it would necessarily bring her into closer communion with her

brother's family. Indeed, the change was stored with more good than we could at first perceive. From this time it was my privilege to consider my sister a constituent member of our family; and I must ever be thankful, in the review, that it enabled us to contribute so easily to her comfort, and to receive from her, in return, so much benefit to ourselves and our children.

In the month of August, the whole family, with the exception of the youngest member, met in this peaceful cottage, and spent some interesting weeks together. Much time and many clouds had passed over us since we had so met; and the retirement of the spot, and the quiet flow of relative intercourse, had a sensible charm to us all, retreating as we were for a while from the pressure of public duty, or the severe strife with life's calamities.

Martha, however, more than any one, was qualified to enjoy this meeting. In her suffering and isolated situation, she had been often ready to despair of a reunion to her family; and now that she was in the midst of them, her disease seemed to subside, in a measure, under the joy of her spirits. She remembered that we assembled beneath trial and loss; but she now knew its extent, and she resolved that she would be the sufferer; that what was lost should be lost to her, and her parents should yet be happy. With this view before her, she could not so deeply lament it; it would be a selfish lamentation; and to console her parents, she appeared to them and to us filled with contentment and cheerfulness. She was indeed our comforter; but yet, to the eye of parental love and sorrow, there was something in all this happy resignation that would affect it to tears. They looked on her as a sufferer and a daughter—their only daughter; they knew that no one could be so affected by their losses as herself; they had valued what the kindness of Providence had given chiefly on her account; and now, with all her cheerfulness and soothings, she would often appear, in their troubled sight, nothing better than the pet lamb of the family, destined to be the meek, unconscious victim of the fiery trial which was to try them!

Notwithstanding this variation in Martha's circumstances, and the degree in which it was likely to subserve her happiness, her thoughts still reverted to the scheme of education which had occurred to her on the first shock of the family reverses. She fondly looked to it as the means of independence and usefulness. She was not too proud, but too conscientious to rely on the resources of her dearest friends while she had the prospect of assisting herself; she knew that, by engaging in some such pursuit, she should best induce her parents to feel satisfied on her account; and I believe I may add, that it was contemplated with more pleasure, as it would exercise some virtues of the character which she had been accustomed to place high in the scale of Christian excellence.

In proportion, therefore, as she could anticipate the accomplishment of her design, she was satisfied; and her satisfaction had recently arisen considerably from the apparent amendment in her health. As the object approached nearer to expectation, it appeared the fairer to her hopes. Every thing, she thought, favoured it. The cottage was well suited to the purpose; and Maria was tendering her services in any way that should best contribute to it. She had nothing to do but to name it to her brother, and this she determined to delay no longer.

I well remember the intercourse which sprang from this determination. It revealed a character familiar to me in new and trying circumstances; and it discovered such delicacy towards me, such tenderness towards her parents, such just respect towards herself, and such a fixed energy of purpose to do whatever was right or worthy, as filled me with admiration. But then it was painful to think that her bodily powers gave little hope that these exercises of the mind could be brought out in action; and still more painful to perceive, that on this point Martha had deceived herself. I saw, with thankfulness, that lately her health had really improved; yet I saw nothing which led me to suppose she would soon be

in a state to embark in the proposed responsible undertaking.

My opinion was sought, and I could not refrain from expressing my fears, yet I could not express them strongly. Martha was not prepared to give them a free entertainment at this moment. The fever of the mind, like that of the body, produces a false strength and spirits; and, under this excitement, she thought herself better than she was. I considered that, though no other pleasure should be realized, she might enjoy, for a considerable time, that of anticipation; and, without pressing cold and unwelcome reasons on her attention, I wished her to act so as most to gratify her inclinations.

Of course she embraced the object, and gave herself to the preparations which should be necessary to its realization. Her attention was fully engaged, and her heart was at rest. She thought not of what she had lost, but of what she might be enabled to effect. With the means of self-provision, she connected the probability of training a number of her own sex rightly to discharge their duties in this life, and to estimate whatever belonged to the world to come. At length, all the preliminary steps were taken; and she now looked to the issue with a hope the more serious and powerful, from the trouble, the expense, and the time which had been given to it.

But life is proverbial for the wreck of human hope. Notwithstanding the excitements still acting on Martha's spirits, her health declined as the winter advanced. She was for some time unable to admit this—it involved the ruin of all her earthly expectations. The admission, the reluctant admission, however, at last forced itself upon her; and now that the illusions of hope were broken, her spirits fell from the elevation they had kept, and her health appeared to her really as it was, and worse than it ever had been.

This winter was eminently a painful one to Martha. Her favourite schemes, on which she had dwelt for some months, and from which she could not at once avert her

thoughts, now occurred to her mind only to distress her; for some time afterward she could not speak of the subject, or look on a child, without tears.

How far anxiety and disappointment excited a sinister influence on the body, cannot be decided; but the animal system now discovered fresh symptoms of derangement. The former attacks returned with greater violence; and, in addition to them, some affections appeared of a paralytic character; so that alternately she was the subject of excruciating pain, and of a torpid insensibility creeping over the body, from which the spirit recoils more than from agony itself. The history of most of her days and nights at this period would embrace only the following transitions—acute pain would ascend into delirium; delirium would sink into apathy; and apathy again would be awakened by pain. Life is short, but it is awful to think what a world of suffering may be crowded into it!

I cannot forbear inserting the following lines, as they allow the sufferer to speak for herself:—

The sun is set upon another day
Of weariness and pain. How oft that sun
Has seen me sporting in its joyous beams,
Lavish of youth, and counting on long days
Of undisturbed delight! But ah, how changed!
These faculties, that once with eager joy
Perused the page of science, now lie wrapt
In melancholy sleep. This heart no more,
With rapture kindling, feeds with living joy
And growing hope on all things beautiful.
Chained to one narrow spot, this feeble frame
Lies like a statue, scarcely breathing life,
Save when aroused by pain to sense of wo.
My summer's day, my gleam of light is past—
The short remains how winterly and drear!
All now is darkness, darkness to be felt.
Ah, whither shall I turn in this sad hour?
To whom shall I betake me? O my God,
Thou art my hope! and though thine hand should slay,
Yet will I trust thee! Well thy servant knows
Thy word divine is faithfulness and truth.
Thou wilt not leave me in the vale of death,
But gently lead me, by thy gracious hand,
To that bless'd world where suffering is no more!

Early in the opening of the year twenty, as the spring advanced and the weather meliorated, Martha found some partial relief; and her spirit sympathized in the hopeful character of the season. It is difficult to make any one who did not observe her, understand how readily she recovered herself on the least qualification of her afflictions —how quickly health and cheerfulness re-appeared in her countenance, and animated gratitude dwelt on her lips. She was accustomed to say, "that a state of *ordinary* pain was a blessing;" and though this ordinary pain would have been *extraordinary* to most other persons, it was always enjoyed with positive satisfaction.

For some time it had been conjectured that the different and perplexing appearances of disease on her frame were symptomatic of a spinal injury; and the use of an horizontal posture had been suggested. The recommendation, however, had not been adopted; it was very unwelcome to Martha and to her friends. The thought of being confined to one position, in one room; of being excluded from the society and agreeable changes which arose to her from being able to visit the sitting-room, and stroll round the garden, could not at once be entertained or even tolerated. But experience, in the end, proved that the measure was expedient, if not acceptable. It became evident to her, that her distress of body was equal to its motion; and when through the day she made no exertion, and was reclining on the sofa, her nights were comparatively free from pain. At length, the power of locomotion was so restricted, that the ascent and descent of the stairs formed an obstacle almost insurmountable; and listening to the more serious requests of her medical advisers, she determined on confining herself to the mattress.

The last day previous to the proposed and indefinite confinement was an affecting one to us all. In the close of that day, I supported Martha to take her final walk in the garden. It was a fine evening in the month of May; and the garden, of which she was peculiarly fond, was dressed in its best array. The one-half of it was thrown into cool and comfortable shade by the clus-

tering trees; while the remainder was resting under the mild radiance of the setting sun. The flowers and shrubs were luxuriant in life and beauty; and the voices of manifold birds, happy beyond utterance, were pouring out the living strains of joy, love, and harmony. Our children, as happy as they, were playing on the daisied lawn; and the elder one frequently running across the path of his aunt, aware of her infirmity, challenged her with an amusing mixture of fear and confidence to catch him.

But Martha's mind was too highly wrought to be playful; it was dwelling with uncommon interest on all the sounds and sights by which she was surrounded. She too was happy; but it was a troubled happiness; it was the happiness we feel in the presence of a friend from whom we are about to be separated. I understood her state of feeling; and winding away from the little prattlers, we pursued our path in silence, which was only broken by simple remarks on the objects before us. She carefully visited all her favourite plants; she spoke of many of them with more admiration than ever before; and we jointly paid them any little attention which they happened to require.

Pained and wearied by her exertion, I led her to her chosen seat for repose. It was imbowered in the fresh and thick-spreading foliage of the nearer trees; and the last rays of the sun were glowing on the trunks of the more distant ones. The whole scene was becoming more calm and peaceful; and twilight was touching all things with its own soft and pensive hues. Martha fed upon it in quiet ecstasy. "How beautiful it is!—How beautiful it is!" she repeated; while the play of the muscles round her lips showed with what mixed and strong emotion her heart was filled.

Quite unwilling to shorten her pleasures, I yet feared the effect of excitement, and proposed retiring to the cottage. "One more walk, brother," was her reply; "Nature is so beautiful *to-night*." We took another walk—and another. At length her measure of strength was exhausted, and we turned towards our quiet habita-

tion. Her eye caught the latticed window of the room to which she was about to ascend, and from which she might never come down! The big tears started from her eyelids, and were suppressed again. We approached the entrance; her spirit recoiled from it, like the bird from its cage. "*One last look*, brother!" said she, as she turned round on the spot which had so often contributed to her innocent gratification. She looked again and again; and then, mastering her feelings, she turned resolutely away, and passed into her dwelling. It was indeed the *last look* she was taking, and she was entering her habitation to come out no more.

CHAPTER XX.

INSTRUCTION. 1820.

How commonly are events the very reverse of what we expect them to be! Those occurrences which we are looking for with restless expectation, are charged with disappointment and vexation; and those which we wait for with shuddering fear, bring with them "blessings in disguise." Martha could not enter on the measure which she was now adopting without anxiety and alarm. It was certainly wise and remedial; but the very idea of confinement, for at least many months, could not be received without pain. Yet, no sooner was the experiment made, than half the terrors which surrounded it were dissipated; and very considerable advantages were as quickly enjoyed. The irritation which had attended exertion passed off; her sleep, her appetite, and her tone of spirits were restored; and suffering only "ordinary pain," she was ready to think she suffered nothing.

Her mind also returned to that equanimity which had been disturbed by the fluctuations of hope and fear, relative to her proposed plans of employment. While there

was a reasonable prospect of effecting them, she resolved they should be effected; and now that prospect was completely veiled, she resigned them with meekness. In either alternative, her strength of character was brought to severe trial; and it was nobly sustained. In her love of independence, there was nothing of pride or caprice: in her reliance on her friends, there was nothing of careless obtrusion, or of sullen regret; her reliance was exercised only as it was necessary; and then it was exercised with a truly delicate, cheerful, and obliging confidence. Her mind was not under the influence of worldly opinion in this conduct; it was regulated by Christian and conscientious motive; and those who are ruled by any thing less, will undoubtedly fail in this *double test* of character.

Of course it became my duty and pleasure to throw round Martha's confinement what comforts I could command. We had previously sent the children down to her; and now, to render her situation less solitary and inconvenient, we determined to make it a partial residence; with the understanding, that I would see as much of her as my public duties permitted. This arrangement operated most beneficially on the mind of the beloved invalid. She now felt the cottage to be entirely a home to her; and for her amusement, she took a share in the domestic management of the little family. This brought her necessarily into communication with the servants; and, as the children and Maria were mostly with her, she was effectually relieved from every sentiment of desertion or banishment.

If ever this sentiment possessed her, it was under other circumstances. It would be on the holy Sabbath, which called away the members of her household to the higher services of the sanctuary. It was then she would feel that she was shut up from the house of God and the people of God, whom she loved; and frequently, when the children, with Maria, came in dressed to take their parting kiss, the silent tear would fall and mix with the embraces. Yet she did not waste sacred time in useless regrets. She regulated the movements of those

about her on this revered day with the watch in her hand, and was particularly careful that no one should leave too late for the very commencement of public worship.

For herself, she generally sought to occupy the time similarly to what she supposed those were doing who were more privileged; and she often found pleasure and assistance in reflecting, that her engagements were those of the manifold congregations of the saints. While she was thus holding a spiritual communion with the church of the living God, it was unattended with any reproaches of conscience; she had never trifled with the means, while they were in her power. It had, indeed, been often painful to see what she endured in giving her attendance; but it was continued to the very last. Although the chapel to which she had to go was not a hundred paces from her present abode, the last time it received her she was above *twenty minutes* in reaching it; and was throughout the service distressed with pain from the exertion.

Martha was now thrown very much into new circumstances, compared with those in which we last traced her efforts of usefulness, and she was anxious to turn them to account. But it will probably be inquired, "What could she do?" Those who have followed her history thus far will be prepared to admit, that the devoted inclination to do good may remain, while they will be disposed to question the present ability and opportunity.

But it may generally be said, that those who will do good shall do good; so much are the will and the act, in this case, identified, that we have insensibly learned to designate both by one name, which literally is of more limited acceptation—*benevolence*. Certainly no situation could promise much less of continued and successful effort than Martha's at this period; she was always a sufferer, frequently a very considerable one; she was confined, not only to her chamber, but to her bed; and, by her change of dwelling, she was cut off from some little facilities for usefulness which her intimate acquaintance with the former hamlet of the village supplied.

Thus circumstanced, if it shall be found that she was able to give efficiency to her predominant desires, the conclusion may fairly be, that none, even in privation, sickness, and seclusion, are deprived of the occasion, or exempt from the responsibility, of doing what is emphatically "the work of our generation." Let us pursue the inquiry.

In relinquishing what was impracticable in her former benevolent pursuits, she did not indiscriminately abandon them all. Her affections and her habits were now so blended with the welfare and society of children, that a prevalent concern was to preserve one class still for her instruction. It was proper to confine it to those of her own sex; and, as many respectable neighbours, who could readily give a common education to their family, were anxiously requesting admission for their children, Martha had an opportunity of selecting her objects, where her designs were most likely to be available. To her and to her young pupils, the Sabbath afternoon was the most favourable period, as they did not require, and she did not desire to impart, any other than religious knowledge.

In all her intercourse with children, Martha never had a more promising band of scholars than this. She became most earnestly interested in their welfare, and it was discovered so effectually, that they soon formed towards her the strongest attachment. Indeed, there was throughout something peculiarly affecting in the communion which existed, in this instance, between the teacher and the taught. It was affecting to see them in succession approach the bedside of their friend, in clean and well-adjusted dresses; and presenting, with a gratified smile of good-nature, some little offering of love, either fruit or flowers, which they had solicited from their parents, for the luxury of having it kindly received. It was affecting to see these children, blooming in health and void of care, forming themselves into a quiet and listening circle around the couch of the sufferer; while she, deviating for the happy interval from the prescribed posture, and supported on pillows, was preparing to impart her instructions.

Affecting it was to hear her accompany the reading of the Scriptures, with the simple explanation, the practical remark, the heart-breathing, affectionate entreaty, which finally found utterance in prayer; while the guileless countenances of her little auditors would be moved sometimes to smiles, sometimes to tears, always to serious attention. It was affecting to see that they were brought sensibly nearer to each other by this short but happy intercourse; and that they could seldom part with satisfaction without some kindly words, and the anticipated kiss, which, if ever it merited the name, was surely "the kiss of charity."

Meanwhile, Martha was influencing her willing friend, Maria, to supply her lack of service, by attending her school at the widow's, in addition to her former engagements; while she kept some hold on the children and their families still, by talking with the elder ones occasionally, and continuing the circulation of her library among them. Thus, while really occupying new and valuable ground, she was preventing what had been already cultivated from sinking into weedy desolation.

Her next concern was to improve her situation, as the centre round which her little household was revolving. The servants were in her estimation an important charge; and, while they were ministering to her in carnal things, she was desirous of rewarding them by those which are spiritual. She laid down simple plans of reading and conversation, which were rendered as pleasing as they were likely to be profitable; and certainly she did not labour in vain.

But the children were the particular objects of her domestic attention. Living now, as they mostly did, in her presence, and contributing largely to her recreation, she had great delight in uniting with their mother to superintend their early education; a period of instruction which, if it requires but little of school accomplishment, cannot be rightly met without just views of human nature, and of the springs of human conduct. These views Martha had derived essentially from the Scriptures and observation; they were enlarged and confirmed by the

careful perusal and comparison of all the best treatises on the subject; and she had acquired a peculiar aptitude in making them available by long-continued practice.

Yet it was not by any superior skill, or any magic of method, beyond the limits of common acquisition, that her efforts were rendered successful; it was by the power of sympathy. Education was never to her a formal task, and therefore it was not so to her little pupils. She put her heart into the employ, and made herself one with them. Sympathy pervaded all she said and did, and became a key to the understanding and the passions. By this mysterious power she could call in the wandering attention, and touch the dormant affections; she could subdue the propensities to perversity, and anticipate the temptation to disobedience; she could render her authority the more effectual, by making its yoke easy and its burden light. By sympathy, she knew how to seize those favourable moments for instruction which come over us all; and was prepared to detect the first shoots of rising conceptions, and to assist the gratified child in giving them a conscious existence in mind and memory, when they would otherwise have prematurely perished. By sympathy, she knew how to select her subjects, how to clothe them with illustrations; and when the faculties of each child had been sufficiently extended and employed, without urging them to weariness and disgust. Sympathy enabled her to mark distinctly the opening variations of temper and of character, and to mould them by the gentle touch or firm pressure to her will, without which a misapplied firmness might have urged fear into hypocrisy, or a mistaken lenity ripened heedlessness into indolence. Her imagination, her judgment, and her practical knowledge were only the prepared instruments of education; they were directed, animated, and sustained by the living soul of sympathy.

Never was her sympathy so fully awake as when her instructions were of a religious nature; and, as nothing is thought so difficult at this early stage as rightly to interest children in divine subjects, it is important to remark, that Martha was eminently successful. Our

children were never so attentive to her as when she spoke of heavenly things. They were nearest her heart; and they were felt to be so even by infancy. Whenever allusions were made to religion, it was always as to something higher and better, and far more important than the things which led to it; and when it was made the subject of a regular lesson, it was as a treat rather than a task. It was thus introduced with pleasant associations; nor did the issue lead to disappointment. Religion, made impressive by her own seriousness, and clothed in her own happy smiles. and glowing in the warmth of her own affections, was so attractive and wonderful as effectually to interest the curiosity and feeling of the children. It was impossible to be a partial spectator of her tenderness, earnestness, and love, in aiding the new-born perceptions to spring into the light and joy of an unseen and spiritual world, without an involuntary application of Goldsmith's similitude—

> "Just as a bird each fond endearment tries
> To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies;
> She tried each art, and checked each dull delay,
> Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

But it was not enough to this imprisoned invalid to be thus blessing her family, and occupying, by her own and her friends' exertions, a sphere of accustomed usefulness beyond the domestic circle; her vigilant and benevolent eye perceived that there were yet other advantages supplied to her from her present situation. She was now living in the vicinity of the college, at which a number of young men were preparing themselves for the Christian ministry. She had long been desirous that, while qualifying for larger scenes of labour, their attention might be directed to the claims of a neighbourhood in which they were temporary residents. Hitherto delicacy had withheld her; but now that she was dwelling with her brother, and that she was the subject of such bodily infirmity as would prevent any misconception of her motive, she thought she might make the attempt consistently, and therefore resolved to make it.

Opportunities soon arose in the calls of some of the senior students on the family, and they were readily embraced. She was gratified to find that they were like-minded with herself; and that, if they had not heeded the events of the surrounding villages, it was because, in the strangeness of a new situation, and the pressure of new duties, united with the transitory term of their continuance, they had not properly occurred to their thoughts. They had now a kind and modest monitor; and they, in a Christian temper and with a most obliging kindness, were ready to become the executors of her suggestions. They quickly learned to appreciate her character; and still reckon among their happiest hours at this period, those passed in her society conversing of the good things of the kingdom, and planning for its prosperity. They took fire from her altar, and bore it away to strengthen the flame where it did exist, and to kindle it where sin and death were reigning in unmolested darkness.

One of Martha's earliest and most urgent representations was in favour of Newgate-street. It had never been out of her mind or her prayers since her first visit, and she had entertained considerable confidence about it; but hitherto little had arisen to give her encouragement. It had remained as it is described, with the exception of a few visits from Maria. But it was too distant for the female foot to reach it with frequency, and the impression made by an occasional visit is weak and desultory.

This was the time, Martha conceived, to make a better attempt; and she succeeded in interesting her new coadjutors in the work. One of them visited the spot and explored the neighbourhood; and was at once impressed with the duty of endeavouring to benefit its inhabitants. He sought the opinion of the people, and found them welldisposed to his intentions. He inquired for suitable accommodation for the purposes of worship and the management of a school; and he obtained it at the cottage which first received my sister when she visited the hamlet. The principal persons around were consulted; a license was procured; preaching was reg-

ularly commenced on the Sabbath evening; and a Sunday-school was readily established, which was taught in the afternoon of the day. The attendance was eager and overflowing; and quickly some good fruits arose from it.

The report of these proceedings, and of the success which crowned them, gave Martha such joy as angels know. The place was associated with some of her happiest recollections; it was connected with some of her most earnest prayers; her hope concerning it had been long deferred; and now that all, and more than all she had imagined was accomplished, and accomplished when she could have least expected it, she could not think of it without shedding the joyous tears of benevolence and gratitude.*

The wine of joy on Martha's mind shed not an intoxicating, but an invigorating influence. Her labour had not been in vain in the Lord, and therefore she resolved to *abound* in it She had long thought that a much more extensive effort might be made for the religious instruction of the rising generation than had yet been tried; and with the influence she now possessed among the students who kindly listened to her proposals, and the assistance she could raise elsewhere, she concluded she might safely press them to an experiment.

The experiment was made. A Sabbath-school, distinct from Martha's own select class, was originated in her own habitation, which soon swelled to such magnitude that it was necessary to move it to the college chapel; where it continues to flourish under the patronage of the presiding tutor and his family. Already the field of instruction and benevolence here presented to the labourer had been entered by Mr. Raikes in a

* Last June I had a mournful pleasure in visiting this place, and addressing the humble villagers. The room in which we met was confined, but it was full; and the preacher was so placed as that he could be as well heard and seen without as within. Those within were serious and attentive; and the mothers with their little ones, unused to worship, took their stand among the flowers in the garden without. It was an interesting specimen of village preaching. Some efforts are making to provide a neat little place of worship.

spirit worthy of the name and the family; and now the combined exertions of the church and chapel promised to occupy it in the length and breadth thereof.

One step leads to another. This endeavour to raise a school where many works of charity were already in action, made a more regular visit to the dwellings of the poor necessary. The object was not to recruit for a new and opposing interest, but to urge the duty of worshipping God *somewhere;* and of giving the children, by *some means*, the advantages of religious instruction. Inquiries were made as to the supply of Bibles in the respective families; and, of course, in these researches, an abundance of distress was discovered. Children were willing to be taught who had not garments in which they could decently appear; parents were willing to labour who vainly asked for occupation. The times were just then pressing on the agricultural poor; and want and sorrow became residents in those cottages which ever before had been enlivened by industry and contentment.

Martha considered this outward distress as a call in Providence to exertion. She thought that the deplored scarcity of bodily supplies might possibly be overruled to create an hungering and thirsting for the bread which giveth eternal life. Yet she could not overlook temporal and present want, while urging the desires to pursue a spiritual and durable portion; and the difficulty was, how to meet those claims of the body without expenses which she could not sustain. However, she roused herself and her assistants to the occasion. Help was sought from the hands of affluence; and she applied to her friends in and out of the family for cast-off garments, tracts, Bibles, and useful books. The appeal was well made, and as well received. Subscriptions came in to support the school, and sufficient to give outward apparel to the more destitute children; and parcels arrived, enclosing money and clothes to be made up for the suffering poor, so as to exceed even eager expectation.

Martha's peaceful cottage now wore a busy th[illegible]

still a peaceful aspect. What with the presence of children; what with the cutting out and making up of garments; what with the attendance of distressed persons; and what with the frequent little cabinet consultations with her companions in works of mercy; it assumed to the imagination the different appearances of a seminary, a manufactory, an asylum, and a levee-room. But whatever were its varying appearances, it was always sacred to charity while her spirit presided in it; and now it is sacred in memory by these and yet tenderer recollections, to those who were certainly not careless spectators of her doings, but who could afford her only poor and occasional assistance, as they were employed in another and a distant sphere.

It is little to say that Martha was happy in these beneficent pursuits; but there was one incident arose from the mass, which, as it gave her much gratification, may find its place in closing this chapter. Among the spreading distress which revealed itself, was that of the family belonging to the individual who was alluded to as giving my sister so much annoyance and pain on her first visit to Cheshunt. He had run the course which his ominous beginning promised; had failed in his trade; was imprisoned for debt; and, in consequence, his wife and children were destitute. The ill-treatment Martha had received, the unhallowed reprobation of her religious profession, were not checks, they were motives to her kindness. She behaved to the wife with marked attention; she consoled her under her trials; and she gave her what assistance she could. She might readily have given this assistance from the stores of which others had made her the almoner; but this, in the peculiarity of the case, would not satisfy her mind. To stand well with her conscience, and to enjoy the full exercise of forgiving love, she must give of her *own*; and it was with a most free and willing hand she disposed of the last shilling in her purse for the aid of this family.

This is illustrative of her generosity of feeling; yet another slight incident of this period may be added as illustrative of her generous opinions. In the wide dis-

tribution of the Bible and Testament which was now effecting, many of the poor expressed a wish to subscribe also for a Prayer-book, coupled with a fear "that perhaps the lady might not like that." They, however, were mistaken in their judgment of the *lady;* Martha immediately obtained a supply of the Common Prayer-book, and whoever desired to contribute for one was at full liberty to do so.

But these are poor illustrations of liberality as it shone in her character. It seemed to have nothing to struggle against; it flowed naturally from her as water from a fountain. There were no unhealthy constrictions about her head or heart; nor was there any unnatural and dangerous enlargement. Her liberality was not of that spurious kind which gives no value to principle—no blame to doubt and ignorance; it arose, not from the *neglect* of truth, but from *confidence* in the truth. Would that such a liberality prevailed! Then, whatever might be our variations of judgment and of denomination, every Christian would hail every other Christian as his brother and his friend; and the church of God would shine forth glorious as the sun, fair as the moon, terrible as an army with banners; and would sustain one victorious conflict only with those who war against "the Lord and his anointed;" and who, in warring against them, war against the peace of humanity and their own salvation!

"Oh for the day, whenever it shall beam,
Which gives us back the coat without a seam;
When from all quarters of the earth combined,
One universal church shall knit mankind.
To build the heavenly Salem then shall rise,
With one consent, the great, the good, the wise.
All sects united in a common band,
Join faith to faith, and mingle hand in hand;
Together lift the sacrifice of prayer,
And the slain Lamb's eternal supper share!"

CHAPTER XXI.

SUSPENSE. 1820–21.

ALTHOUGH the hand of heavenly wisdom may lead us to drink at the springs of pure happiness, they will not, in this life, remain untroubled. Religion had revealed to Martha in its enjoyments and pursuits, the only unpolluted sources of happiness; but she was still exposed to those regrets and anxieties which more or less attend a state of imperfection and discipline.

Some of her regrets, in the fall of this year, arose from her communications with London. She heard of changes transpiring, and friends becoming ill, nigh unto death, and restored again to health and activity, while she lay in the same helpless state; and this would sometimes give a lengthened and hopeless form to her confinement. She received many expressions of affectionate esteem and desire from her former companions; and they awakened similar desires, once more to meet them and co-operate with them in the flesh. But especially she had to regret the wastes of mortality in her old and beloved connections. Particularly one of her dearest young friends, in whose welfare she was interested as in her own, had become a happy mother, had sickened, had languished, had died, had been buried, and the infant had sunk into the same grave; and Martha had not been able to utter one word for her consolation, shed one smile on her sorrows, or drop one tear on her grave.

The suspense which hung over Martha's situation gave her occasional concern. Though a prisoner, and enduring much affliction, there was nothing in her present bodily estate to excite alarm for the issue; while, therefore, she had contentedly resigned all worldly pursuits, she was often perplexed to decide whether it were her duty to prepare herself for future usefulness here, or to look only on eternity.

If suspense, however, gave her some perplexity, she did not permit it to betray her best interests. She was aware of its sinister influence, and kept a strict watch against it. "You would imagine," she observed to her sister, "that death would be no surprise to me; but I have been so long in this position, that I do not perhaps expect a change any more than others. The mind may be held in a middle state of suspense, till it becomes nearly indifferent to it." In her correspondence with a friend, she says,—"The state of my health has been extremely critical; it is now better, and I may linger as I am for many months; and, perhaps, after all, it may terminate differently to what can be expected. Yes, I may yet perfectly recover, and trip with as light a foot over your green as any lass of sixteen!—But, whatever the event, I desire to be ready for my last summons! O how differently does death appear when seen obscurely at a distance, and when standing just before one ready to give the blow! Truly it is a serious thing to die. O that our lives may be one habitual preparation for this last conflict!"

Prayer has a reflex action. The desires we breathe animate the efforts we make. Never were desires more fully realized than those she here expresses. Suspense could not weary her; hope could not allure her from the post of watchfulness. She knew not the hour when the Son of Man should come, and *therefore* she was anxious to be always waiting for his coming. She sought to make her calling and election sure, knowing that this blest assurance would alike aid her in this life, or prepare her, with faith and without "sudden amazement," for the opening of another.

It will scarcely be supposed, after the statements of the preceding chapter, that Martha's regrets at this period were sometimes increased by a sense of *uselessness*. Yet it appears, from what her hand has at intervals minuted, that she was subject to depression on this account. She refers to the "useless life she is leading," "requiring the help of others, and able to do nothing in

return," and "fears that her life will be run out before she had done any thing for Him who gave it;" and if ever she now thought of her situation with pain, it was uniformly in connection with these impressions.

If such anxieties as these, in such a person, were not expected, they are yet capable of explanation. Though Martha was the living centre of so much devoted activity, her humility prevented her from ascribing these exertions to herself; and the very bustle that would often be created by the execution of her own plans, while she kept one fixed position, would occasionally affect her with a sense of helplessness and inutility. The *high standard* to which she always brought herself had also the same tendency. Compared with her principles, compared with her obligations, compared with what her Saviour had done and commanded her to do, she had done nothing. An elevated standard had given elevation to her mind. She looked not at what was done, but at what was to do; and while she sighed over woes unhealed, sins unsubdued, a world unregenerated, her mightiest effort was but as a drop of heavenly rain falling on the great salt waters.

As these regrets did not influence Martha to disregard her spiritual interests, so they did not divert her from those which are intellectual. She did not allow the idea, that her mental improvement might never be useful to her in this life, to break up her studies. She connected the sound cultivation of the mind with a future life, and the nearer, therefore, she might approach it, the more important and interesting was the duty. She considered "that spiritual and intellectual treasures are the only ones we can carry with us to a better world, and that we ought to value and pursue them accordingly." Acting under such sentiments, she still gave herself diligently to reading and meditation; her pleasure increased as she advanced; and never have I met with a more palpable proof of the advantage accruing to a young person from the careful perusal of well-selected books. This will have been traced already in her past progress; but it was still so conspicuous at this period

as to require observation. Her understanding was yet more enlarged; her judgment ripened; her fancy quickened; the store of her conceptions enriched; and, consequently, the means of mental gratification improved and multiplied.

In her present course of reading, it was deemed desirable that she should be introduced to some books which had hitherto been proscribed; their contents formed an important link in the chain of knowledge; but they were not to be trusted as the guides of unformed opinion, and young impassioned feeling. With a regulated mind and most serious views before her, Martha now read what was valuable in the writings of these exceptionable writers, not only without danger, but with benefit. She despised the sly sophistry of the infidel historian, who would travel willingly out of his way to make a side-thrust at a religion he had taken no pains to understand. She pitied the poor poet, who, in the conflicts of an ambitious and carnal spirit, was alternately aspiring to dwell among the stars, and floundering in the mire of sensuality and selfishness. She condemned the moralist, professedly Christian, who, seeking to illustrate moral conduct, as connected with revelation, in the most elegant and interesting manner, feared to incur the world's blame by any decided allusions to those *peculiarities* in revelation which distinguish and exalt Christianity from every false system.

The more she became acquainted with general literature and with the literary world, the more she was convinced that real science and real happiness were inseparable from religion. The only invaluable lights of the world, whether civil, moral, or literary, were those which shone from Heaven; and without them, the gleams of reason, the glow of feeling, and the sparklings of genius were such as would blind, bewilder, and deceive us. The uncertainty of all things, even of those which she most admired and pursued, was more apparent to her; she pressed the Bible closer to her heart, and fixed her faith and hope more assuredly in the haven of a better world. Would that the same

course of study had always led to the same conclusions! But it has often been commenced with a mind ignorant of religious truth and unaffected by religious principles; and nothing is so seductive on a young and aspiring spirit as the pleasures of literature. Unhappily these pleasures, in an unprepared state of mind, cannot be safe or innocent. The great mass of our existing literature is an array against godliness; and it is yet *mostly* in the hands of those who, in pledging their devotedness to the muses, are too much disposed to stone or despise the prophets.

Martha had now spent nearly six months on her bed in nearly the same position; but neither the indefinite term of her confinement, nor the transitory regrets which sometimes gave a pensive colouring to her thoughts, nor yet the serious direction of her mind to high and benevolent pursuits, had deprived her of her wonted cheerfulness in domestic life. Her chamber was not the place of complaint, restlessness, and vapid wishes; it was the happiest room in the house, and it was made so by its chief inhabitant. When we were away, many of her thoughts were employed to make it attractive; and when we were present, she was anticipating us by every little act of kindness, catching and returning every look of love, and shedding over her guests the soothing influence of her glad words, undissembled smiles, and frank good-nature. It was evident that all this sprang from her heart, and that, while she was intent on promoting the happiness of others, she was positively the most happy of the little company. This conduct insensibly led us to associate the idea of comfort with her chamber; if the children had met with any troubles below stairs, they fled to it as to a sanctuary; and if their parents desired an hour's quiet enjoyment, they were commonly disposed to seek it here rather than elsewhere. How unlike the sick-room as we frequently find it! where peevish complaint and selfish passion are multiplying themselves in sorrow, by driving those from their presence who should be their most tender comforters.

Let it be observed, however, that, if Martha was among the bright exceptions to this evil, it was not without an effort. Earlier in her history, it will be remembered, she saw her danger, and provided against it; and, from that time, she had been watchful lest the diseases of the body should affect the temper of the mind. Her cheerfulness, therefore, remained, but its *character* was changed. It had less of the animal and more of the spiritual nature in it. If it had been dependant on the buoyancy of youthful spirits, and the ardour of inexperienced hope, it would have passed away; but it rested on principle; it had been cultivated as a Christian grace; it was the child of genuine pervading piety; and "true piety is cheerful as the day;" and piety, let it be added, is the only sure foundation of whatever gives embellishment to life or stability to virtue.

Apart from what Martha found in the presence of some members of the family, her recreations were necessarily few and limited; and it is scarcely requisite to say, they were simple and innocent. Her window commanded a fair prospect; but as she lay her eye was confined to the spreading branches of a couple of beech-trees, which threw out their cool and bright foliage almost to her room. In these trees, however, a happy pair of doves had built their nest, and were training their young; and many a wakeful night was made the shorter and easier to her, by the amusement they supplied to her mind, in watching their movements and listening to their loves, as the soft light of day glowed on the garden. The robin, too, which she had been accustomed to feed, still sought his breakfast at her hand, and repaid her through the day with many a thankful song, at the very verge of her casement. Within her chamber were a few young plants which she still sought to cherish; and in her window grew and flourished a favourite geranium, which had already been the care of years.

These objects, trifling as they were, exercised and engaged her attachments. They excited her solicitude; they kept up her intercourse with nature and the out-

ward world; they often met her eye when other objects were withdrawn; till, what from familiarity, what from association, what from care bestowed and pleasure received, they made themselves a place in the kindest of hearts, and seemed the necessary companions of her confinement. Her window would have appeared vacant without the ornament of the plant which dwelt there, and her room would have appeared dull without the presence of those birds which had so long enlivened it. Those will best understand and sympathize with this sentiment, whose tastes are natural and unaffected, and who have marked how readily, in some situations, local attachments may grow and strengthen. The following lines illustrate the disposition in Martha's case; they were minuted with a careless hand, when the plant she alludes to required a more open situation.

THE GERANIUM.

'Tis gone! my Geranium is fled,
And left my gay window folorn;
I watch'd its green leaves as they spread,
And water'd it many a morn.

'Twas there, when no other was by,
To comfort my sorrowful heart;
I mourn'd—and it seem'd in reply
A sweeter perfume to impart.

Ah, once I had thought it absurd
To waste my regret on a flower;
But trifles like this have concurr'd
To charm me with magical power.

Unchang'd, while the seasons return,
My objects of pleasure are few;
But these, when familiar, I learn
With double enjoyment to view.

The robin I constantly feed,
And the plant I so carefully tend,
To me they are lovely indeed,
And I give them the cheer of a friend.

As the winter shut in, the family was brought closer together; and Martha's presence was so attractive, that insensibly her chamber became, as much as it conveniently

could, the dwelling-room. The evenings of this period were attended with no striking incidents, but they were charged with a great deal of quiet happiness, and the remembrance of them is sweet. So soon as the social tea-tray was removed an evening hymn was sung, and the children's voices were trained to the notes of heavenly praise. Then their little hands were formed in prayer, and "Our Father" lisped on their tongues to Him who is the father of us all; and then the kind wishes and endearing kisses went round, and the children retired to soft and sure repose.

Now, formed round a bright fire, and free from all interruption, the enjoyments of the evening flowed peacefully along. The needle was plied; the profitable book was read; and conversation was indulged to weigh its arguments, or pursue some prize which its train of thought had suggested. As often as my duties allowed, I esteemed it a privilege to take my place in this little circle, knowing that its completion would be a source of additional pleasure to all who composed it. To Martha's social nature these interviews with her family were eminently pleasing. She always took a large share in the enjoyments of the evening, and frequently was the principal spring of them.

It was on these occasions that I saw so much the improvement of her conversational powers. There was the same vivacity and playfulness, the same piety and unction in her manner as I had ever witnessed; but there was more comprehension of thought, more force of argument, more variety of allusion and remark, and a quicker taste for whatever was just and beautiful in colloquial intercourse. Fond as she was of conversation, and greatly as that fondness was cherished by her confinement, she never pressed it on others to excess. She did not prepare for it as for a laborious exercise; she looked to it as a wholesome relaxation. She did not consider, that to talk and to be happy are the same thing. She was one of the most ready listeners; and was always more satisfied in interesting others than in discoursing herself Her thoughts were at liberty to respect whatever was said,

and her heart caught by sympathy the import of all that was expressed, and of all that was implied. In speaking herself, she had no pride to gratify, no humour to vent, no battle to win, no treasure to display; in attending to others, there was no rude indifference, no selfish abstraction, no vain impatience. In the social circle, she was only an integral part of the whole, and she was united to it by warm and living sympathies. She was the most interesting of companions!

The penning of these few sentences brings the scenes to which they allude afresh over my recollections—recollections that cannot be retained or relinquished without pain. I perceive her once more reclining on her couch, dressed in white raiment, and overshadowed by the white festoons of her curtains. The glowing and fitful lights of the fire [illegible]ying over the features of her raised and anim[illegible]nance. Her hand is gently moved from its resting-place; her lips are just parted, hanging with affectionate attention on the voice of others; her eyes are swimming with pleasure, while they are gazing on those she so deeply loves.

It was happiness to us to witness her happiness. Then, the winds might rock in the surrounding trees, the tempest might howl about our humble dwelling, and night might encompass us with all her wintry terrors,—we had only the stronger sense of our felicity; we were urged the closer to each other; our thoughts mixed together, and mixed with Heaven; with Heaven! whence we derived our present shelter and supplies in a bleak wilderness; with Heaven! where all things beautiful and fair endure as they are for ever; with Heaven! where the sky never lowers—where the storm never arises—where no foe can ever enter—whence no friend shall ever depart!

CHAPTER XXII.

INCREASING AFFLICTION. 1821.

How much misery are we spared by our ignorance of the future! The winter was thus wearing happily away, and our hopes of Martha's situation were rising with the advancing year. How differently would these months have found us, had we known that disease was directing its attack under new forms, and was preparing for the beloved sufferer a new and yet bitterer cup of affliction!

This, however, was the case. During the month of February Martha had experienced an increase of local uneasiness; but being accustomed to endure with patience a large measure of pain, she ascribed it to her continuance in one position, and bore it in silence. It was still increasing, and was soon attended with tumour and fever. Painful as it was, she could no longer hide the truth from herself; and she then unwillingly named it to her family.

Notwithstanding the light way in which this affection was treated by Martha, I could not avoid considering it of a very serious nature. I urged her to let us procure further advice; and, at length, she gave herself up to the wishes of her friends. Early in March, therefore, I went down with an hospital surgeon; and he agreed, in consultation with the resident surgeon, that an operation was necessary; that to be effectual, it must be performed without delay; and that the case was one "of considerable doubt."

These were heavy tidings to our entire household. Martha received them with concern; but after relieving herself by a few tears, her mind became composed and braced to the resolution of submitting to her duty, however piercing to the flesh, however contrary to her inclination. She had but one condition to propose, and that

was not concerning herself; it was, that the operation might take place in the absence of her brother.

The time, therefore, was finally arranged unknown to me. The anticipated morning arrived; it was a morning of trembling and alarm to the little family. One member was about to suffer, and all the members were prepared to suffer with it. They all assembled round Martha's couch, and lifted up their voice to Heaven for help in the hour of adversity. The hour came. The incisions were made. The operation was completed; and the patient sank, beneath bodily and mental exhaustion, insensibly on her pillow.

I arrived at the cottage about an hour after the departure of the surgeon. Mrs. R. was waiting to receive me.

"It is all over!" she said.

"What is over?"

"The operation."

"Over!"

"Yes, Martha wished you not to know it till it was over."

"Did she suffer much?"

"Yes, extremely; the incisions were so deep and numerous."

"How did she sustain it?"

"Like a lamb; not a word, not a tear! Mr. H. says he never witnessed such fortitude."

"Noble creature!" forced itself from my lips; but the emotions of the heart were such as words were never meant to utter.

Although the light thrown on Martha's case by this operation was not unfavourable to hope, our hopes had fallen very low to what they had previously been. Yet, ready as we were to hope the best, they soon began to revive on perceiving any marks of amendment; and these arose to our observation earlier and stronger than any of us expected.

Martha's great composure of mind contributed to hasten her recovery to her usual state; and her release from an extra portion of pain, which she had previously suffered, made that recovery sensible. During the winter, we

commonly alluded to the ensuing May as the period for her relinquishing her bed; when the necessity of an operation was announced, these fair hopes were crushed; but now her expectations began to revive, and she fondly cherished them. Whenever they were expressed to me, I showed myself somewhat incredulous, lest she should reckon too ardently on what might possibly not occur.

However, as the remnants of winter passed away, as the time of the singing of birds arrived, and as the voice of her turtle-doves was again cooing in the beech-trees, her hopes and desires continued to ascend. She begged to have the dresses, which had so long rested in their wardrobe, brought out; and one of the number was selected and made ready for her use, when first she should be prepared to put it on. It was pleasing to see her thus amused; and painful to fear that it might end in disappointment.

May actually came. One morning, early in the month, we were all busily employed in the garden. The sun was shining brightly in the blue heavens; the birds were pouring forth their mellow and sprightly music. The air was glowing with a quickening warmth, and filled with delicious fragrance. The trees, with their young, green foliage, were nodding in the breeze; and all things were new, fresh, and lovely, in this resurrection of nature, as if they had just come from the hand of the great Creator. Martha's youthful heart answered to the impulses of spring. The life and joy of all about her seemed to inspire her with life and vigour. May was come. It was the time she was to leave her bed. It was a twelvemonth since she had seen the garden. She thought she really could get up; and she should never do it if she did not try. In the midst of her hesitation, the children, as they often did, hailed her from beneath the window. It was too much. She must see how happy they were, and look on her beloved garden once more. The mind was decided; the effort was to be made; and the chosen dress was brought out. She arose from her position; would not credit the sense of weakness that came over her; and persevered in her attempt, till she

was surprised by a fainting fit, which her fatigue had produced.

The disappointment was very great; but it was borne with eminent resignation, and her cheerfulness of spirits was soon recovered. Her situation, however, evidently assumed more of a *hopeless* character from this failure. She frequently spoke, indeed, of leaving her present position; but it was generally to cheer her friends, and never with so much of personal conviction and eager desire as she had previously indulged.

Martha's peaceful submission to what now appeared more than ever an indefinite confinement, did not hide from us the impression it had made on her heart; nor were we the less disposed to sympathize with it. Since the disappointment could not be entirely overcome, the object was to mitigate its influence as much as possible; and thought was soon busy among us to form any contrivance which should have this tendency. It was, therefore, speedily determined, that a variation might be made in the situation of the couch, which would give her a new and enlarged view of the adjoining scenery; and as the sight of her garden was an object to her, we attached a mirror to the side of her bed, that it might reflect, at her touch, the different parts of it.

Martha's point of observation was now really interesting. As she lay on her raised couch, her eye fell on the outer parts of the garden; and she could control the nearer portions by the means we had provided. The trees on either side this little enclosure formed, by their clustering branches, a handsome avenue to the meadow-land beyond it, in which the cattle were finding pasture. Those fields were bounded by the village-path and stile, over which the humble peasant was, every now and then, seen to pursue his quiet way; and this path, again, was succeeded by an extensive growth of corn, which was springing rapidly from the earth, and taking a prominent place in the picture. Then came, sweetly shaded and canopied by trees which once owned the Wolseys and Cromwells for their proprietors, the little hamlet where Martha had so long dwelt, and dwelt so happily. And

finally arose, swelling in the distance, the verdant hills, with modest cottages creeping up their sides, and olive-coloured woods adorning their heads, while around them all the lights, and shadows, and colours of heaven were playing, and will for ever play, in endless diversity of beauty.

These little attentions wrought much more powerfully on Martha than we had anticipated, or perhaps than we could anticipate, without being placed in her circumstances. The scenery which was now before her, though so familiar and so often admired, had been shut up from her sight for upwards of a year; and now that she looked again on the children dancing over the garden, the cattle grazing in the fields, the villagers passing on their way, and the place of her former residence, surrounded by all its beautiful accompaniments, tears of admiration and joy gushed into her eyes, while they were fixed to the objects which had so unexpectedly come across and enchanted them. The *change* seemed to break the sense of continued confinement. One period appeared to be terminated, and another to be begun; and begun under such a freshness of feeling as made it the lighter and shorter to endure.

The summer months of this year passed away most pleasantly. Martha enjoyed great relief in her corporeal sensations, if not decided amendment in her state of health; and this qualified her to relish this delightful season with all her former associations, and left her at liberty to hold a happy communion with her friends and family. The state of her mind also discovered some beneficial variations, which it well becomes the biographer to mark, while yet he despairs of giving the full impression of the living reality.

Notwithstanding Martha's apparent bodily improvement, she did not allow it to become a dependance to her hopes; she had been many times disappointed. During the preceding year her mind had been held in suspense between the claims of this life and another; but from the moment she found it necessary to resign herself to the lancet of the surgeon, that suspense was

destroyed. She conceived it would be rash for her to think of a return, from her perilous circumstances, to the active duties of life; and, therefore, she was authorized in directing her attention wholly towards futurity. She was not certain as to the event; but she felt she had sufficient conclusions to govern the course of her thoughts, and that it would be unwise and criminal not to act upon them without delay. She turned from the world, and looked full on eternity. The thoughts were gathered up into one purpose, the heart was fixed to one object. "This *one thing she did*, forgetting the things that were behind, she pressed forward to the prize of her high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

This change was wrought not so much by any conceived resolution, as by the spontaneous inclinations of the mind; and it was revealed not so much by any direct expressions, as by a different occupation of time. Martha now relinquished that class of reading which was designed to illustrate worldly science and adorn and felicitate civil intercourse. It was good and valuable in its kind, but not appropriate to her then situation. If literature was associated with piety, and the unassuming handmaid of devotion, it was still welcome; otherwise, though it might, in a possible change of circumstances, be resumed, it was for the present wholly avoided. Particularly those writers were her companions who were most likely to shed light and comfort on her way, even though that way should lead her quickly into the valley of death. It need scarcely be said that the Scriptures were the book of her counsel—the book of books in her estimation. They had long been so, and now they were pre-eminently endeared; she spoke of their wisdom, grace, and purity with peculiar admiration; and derived the refreshment, and exercised the confidence, which they only could authorize or impart. This sacred volume was always by her side; and her French Testament, with the Prayer-book, and Watts's Hymns, were usually lying on her bed, if not actually in her hand.

Familiarized as Martha's thoughts and affections had been to devotional engagements, now that they were con-

centrated and disencumbered, they rose rapidly towards their divine object. Her anxieties, her hopes, her fears, freed from all worldly concerns, were no longer checks to her career; they were wings to her progress. The perceptions she had always had of the divine presence became stronger, and this was now the element by which she was surrounded, and in which she dwelt. God was in all her thoughts and all her ways. She saw him, felt him, adored him, trusted him in every thing; and this gave a sacredness to all things which concerned her. Her meals were sacraments; her days were sabbaths; her desires were prayers; her person, body, soul, and spirit, was a living and willing sacrifice to Him who gave and redeemed it. Anticipating the possibility of a speedy summons to the heavenly world, she sought to be prepared for it; she desired that, as much as was practicable, it should call her only to a change of place, not of employment. She was "looking for and hastening unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ." The Being she was humbly expecting to come and receive her to himself, she wished yet more intimately to know, yet more deeply to love. With fixed attention she contemplated "the glory of the Lord," as the young eagle gazes on the sun before he makes his ascent to it, that she might be changed into the same glory by the Lord the Spirit.

The yearnings and aspirations of the heart towards a heavenly world were graciously acknowledged. Her prayers were answered; her happiness was advanced, perhaps as near perfection as is compatible with our present state of being. Invisible objects were yet more realized to the eye of faith as it dwelt upon them; heaven became more charming as it became more familiar; and eternity was rendered more solemn, but less awful to her thoughts. Her progress improved with her joy. Nothing on earth, nothing in heaven, was comparable with the enjoyment of the divine favour. She drew nearer to her Saviour, and he drew nearer to her. The sun of righteousness arose on her spirit, ascending from a life of darkness and tears, with

healing in his wings; and beneath the light and glory of his rays, her faith was ripening into confidence, her hope into spiritual enjoyment. "It was a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" she had so long loved and served; and mercifully designed to prepare her for the remaining trials of the wilderness.

The best evidence that these refreshments from a better world were as *beneficial* as they were mercifully designed, is, that they promoted the growth of genuine *humility*. This highest proof of a real advancement in a divine life, which had uniformly attended Martha's progress, now shone forth, so as to become the grace and ornament of her whole conversation. Her joys led to no high-flown expressions, to no inflated assurance, to no bold assertions, to no unseemly lightness in treating of religion, or her interest in its blessings. No—these are the attendants of presumption, not of faith. She had such an abiding consciousness of her own unworthiness, as kept her thoughts and expressions habitually low; and now that she was rising in her views of the uncreated glory, she saw more of her ignorance, her deficiencies, her demerit, her nothingness. God was every thing to her, she herself was vanity. These deeply-fixed convictions were operative on her conduct. They spread a modesty over all her words and a gentleness over all her opinions. She did not indulge in converse on her personal assurance and abounding hope; she sought rather to speak of the object in which she confided, than of her confidence in it; and if ever she gave a reason of the hope that was happily enjoyed, it was eminently with meekness and with fear. Penetrated by her own ignorance, she could not boast of its best conclusions; impressed by the majesty of her Saviour, she humbly revered and adored him; and touched by his ineffable condescension, the very acts of his grace, while they encouraged, awed her. Blessed, like the patriarch at Bethel, with freer and larger communion with Heaven, she did not wax vain and assuming in her privileges; her spirit sunk within itself, and in lower prostration of heart at the divine footstool, she

was ready to exclaim, "How dreadful is this place—surely it is the gate of heaven!"

The happiness Martha now possessed was decidedly of a more *peaceful* character. It flowed on in a deeper and smoother channel, and therefore, to a careless eye, perhaps, was less apparent, because less resisted. The principles of religion now worked with the force of habit and the freedom of nature; and the passions, from long discipline, were brought into a state of comparative harmony and submission. The heart was less exposed to the alarms of fear and inexperience, less affected by spiritual anxieties, less raised by feverish excitation. There was less excitement, but more vigour; less of an approach to occasional ecstasy, more of an abiding tranquillity. The features of the mind were more finished, more mellowed, and sunk more imperceptibly into each other; "they were stablished, strengthened, settled." She had passed through the furnace of manifold affliction; and had come out of it assoiled of earthly grossness, and possessed of more purity, solidity, and excellence of character. The sun had shone brightly on the morning of her day of life; but soon the heavy clouds of adversity gathered round her way, and concealed its glory. The keen winds of temptation had vexed her, and the stormy waters of passion had threatened to overwhelm her. But He who appointed the storm, managed it. The winds had ceased; the waters had rocked themselves to sleep; the sun had beamed with fresh splendour through the troubled and broken clouds, and now shone out, in the close of his career, from the golden heavens, in mild tranquillity. Peace, the blessing she had so greatly prized and diligently pursued, was now more than ever hers; it inhabited her bosom; it sat on her countenance; it fell from her tongue; it surrounded her as an unction from heaven. It was the "peace of God which passeth all understanding;" it arose from the mind being *staid* on its Redeemer. It gathered strength from the arm on which it leaned, and serenity from the foundation on which it reposed. It was the rest of the soul; and the soul, like the sea-

man's needle, is never at rest, till, free from all earthly attractions, it points directly to God!

The religion which sheds its own peace on the heart, brings also, and proportionally "good-will towards men." Martha, in other circumstances, had discovered, in an eminent degree, this divine benevolence; and now, in relinquishing her share in this world's concerns, she did not renounce her regard to its best interests. Through her recent sufferings she had strenuously persevered in all her schemes of usefulness; and, as the violence of pain subsided, she gave herself to them with renewed ardour and joy. Her energy was more calm and placid, but it was more condensed and powerful. She had fewer anxieties and wishes to do what was evidently beyond her present power, but a stronger desire that others might be stimulated to work diligently while it is called to-day. She felt herself more at liberty, as her incapacity grew upon her, to exhort and influence those about her to instant devotedness. The casual visiter who came in her way was not allowed to depart without some attempts to fix the best impressions on the heart; her young friends were advised and entreated with all sisterly affection; and if the student or the minister was present, she was the more eager to improve the period, knowing that if she could possibly say any thing to animate him to more activity, it would be moving a host in the good cause.

This intercourse was sustained with such sweetness of temper, and clothed with so much humility of spirit, as gave it great effect. It was apparent that she discoursed of the things which laid closest to her heart, and under an unutterable sense of their infinite importance and glory. She stood in the light of which she spoke; she felt the charms of that love she commended; and she was unconsciously a living and shining example of those pure, and potent, and blessed influences, which were urged as the only abiding sources of happiness here or hereafter. A marked spirituality of mind spread itself over every thing which engaged her attention, and gave to her chamber, which had always been cheerful and was still so, an air of sacredness. The thoughts and words

might not always be dwelling on religion, but every thing led to it; and led to it, not by forced, but most spontaneous acts of the mind. Her spirit was in such close fellowship with its Maker, that all things, the usual variations in nature, the simplest wants of life, the most trivial incidents of the day, the passing observation of a friend, would connect itself, reverently, but most readily, with Deity. Thought might visit earth, but it dwelt in heaven.

Many will long remember, some will never forget, their interviews with Martha at this period. The smile, the voice, the manner; the heavenly-mindedness, the peace, the joy, will all be present to them; and to them any description will fall greatly beneath the reality. How often have those who came to console, tarried to rejoice! How frequently have we heard the exclamations on quitting her presence, "Well, this is religion!"—"This is a sick room, indeed, to be coveted!"—"I have never seen any thing like this!"—"This should make us ashamed of ourselves!" Happy were our ears to hear so many voices glorifying God, on behalf of one who was our treasure and our joy!

All this, however, was plainly observable to the visiter and the guest; to those who had fuller opportunities of noticing her more closely and at leisure, and comparing the present with the past, the change was more striking and admirable. Her general excellence of character arose not so much from the predominance of certain graces, as from their being accompanied with other Christian graces, which, because they are not often found in manifest union, have been thought to be in opposition. A noble and diligent course of self-discipline and denial had enabled Martha to prune what was excessive and to invigorate what was feeble in her character; till all the parts and members of the divine nature were proportioned and united, and thus grew up together in common loveliness. There was benevolence checked by discretion, humility sustained by dignity, sensibility regulated by principle; independence without pride, confidence without presumption, joy without extravagance, piety without mysticism, charity without guile and without bounds. Her decision

was free from bigotry, her firmness blended with resignation, and her liberality estranged from indifference. She had energy to do whatever was to be done, fortitude and patience to bear whatever was to be endured. With a superiority to all petty differences, there was a fixed adherence to the vital principles of godliness; with the utmost gentleness of spirit that would not crush a worm, there was a magnanimity that could not meanly crouch to a prince; with the most complete renunciation of all human power and merit in our salvation, there was the most voluntary and untiring devotedness to the Saviour's honour; with a crucifixion to the world,—its wealth, its fame, its power,—there was an inextinguishable, irrepressible concern for its restoration to virtue, honour, and immortality; with a lofty and virgin attachment to all that is holy in religion and great in eternity, there was the most careful respect to the minutest points of duty and proprieties of conduct;—but no, it cannot be told.

It was this combination of parts, this consistency of character, that now became eminently interesting. This it was that gave strength to the whole, that shed a grace on the whole, and that contributed so much to produce the softened composure and happy tranquillity which were now experienced. These too, let it be observed, were the fruits of self-denial and of self-conquest—that noblest of all conquests. It is self-denial—steady, resolved self-denial—that subdues our natural frailties, and cherishes the graces most opposite to our natural dispositions. It is self-denial that tears up the weed, the brier, and the bramble; and prunes and nourishes the better plants, till the whole soul becomes as the garden of Paradise.

And this self-denial, let it be remembered, in its turn, springs from the divine grace. The cause cannot act against itself. Self cannot conquer self any more than Beelzebub can cast out Beelzebub. A man may contend against his ambition, or his avarice, or his sensuality; but no man *of himself* can resist *himself;* it is a contradiction in terms. Dispose as we may of other conquests philosophy and religion teach us, that the man who con-

quers himself must humbly as also gratefully exclaim, "By the grace of God, I am what I am!"

In the autumn of this year, I was separated from my sister for a month; and the separation was made much the lighter by the apparent amendment in health which she now enjoyed. However, it was not without considerable feeling on both sides; but Martha, true to herself, insisted upon it, as she conceived it to be for the benefit of her brother. I put the following simple verses in her hand on parting, as a little lovetoken. Simple as they are, they afforded her pleasure; and as they were the *last* gift it was permitted me to make to her, they derive from this circumstance an accidental interest, and I have a melancholy satisfaction in giving them a place in these recollections. They are *partly* a translation from a French hymn.

HYMN.

O my God, my Saviour!
In thy celestial favour
Is my supreme delight;
The more my woes oppress me,
The more do Thou possess me
With thy heavenly might.

Whene'er my heart is broken,
Before my grief is spoken,
God pities my complaint;
And when he might reject me,
He kindly does protect me,
Lest all my courage faint.

By night his arm attends me,
And graciously defends me,
And soft is my repose;
The eyes that watch my keeping
Are never, never sleeping—
I cannot fear my foes!

By day his hand shall lead me,
And heavenly manna feed me,
Through all my desert way;
His beam my path enlightens,
And more and more it brightens,
Into eternal day!

O my God, my Saviour!
Soon thy celestial favour
Shall be my *sole* delight;
With seraphs I'll adore Thee,
With seraphs chant thy glory,
Around thy throne of light!

CHAPTER XXIII.

CLOSING SCENES. 1821.

"To die like a lamb," is expressive of general desire, when death must be thought of as a matter of necessity. That the mind should be composed, and the body's pains made short and few in the mortal hour, is what we lawfully crave for ourselves and our friends. But too much stress has been laid on an *easy* death, and too little on a *safe* one. Yet the reflective mind will at once perceive, that they do not even admit of a comparison. What can it *materially* signify in the article of death, how the corporeal or mental powers are tried and distressed, if the soul is safe, the blest reversion of immortality secure?

"A happy death," as it is too often conceived of by the world, has, it is to be feared, a regard to the *present* rather than the *future;* and it may arise from causes very far apart from a reasonable hope, and a state of Christian salvation. It may spring from the complexion of bodily disease, or from spiritual insensibility; from disgust of the present life, or from disbelief of a world to come; from presumptive delusion, or from unbending pride. Hume aspired to *die well;* he knew that the eyes of the world were turned on the close of his erratic course with fixed attention; and his utter heartlessness to the claims of this life, his daring skepticism on all beyond him, his cherished vanity as the leader of a false philosophy, combined to fit him for acting well his part. But his principles carried him too far; and the example he meant to commend by them has branded them with indelible disgrace. They had taught him that death itself "is only turning the current of a few ounces of blood," and that all beyond death is oblivion; and they had so paralyzed all the moral perceptions and energies, that he

became, on his own assumptions, a miserable driveller, where he wished to be the extolled philosopher.

Philosophy herself, uncertain and feeble as are her lights, would have taught him to be serious while standing on the verge of existence; but seriousness might have been construed into sadness; and that the spectators might have no doubt of the actor's happiness, he proceeded to titter and to trifle. To titter and to trifle! —with the silliness of a little child that plays with the cockatrice, or smiles on the events which are charged with its ruin!

To Martha death was ever a serious thing. Hope might change the countenance of this adversary, faith might disarm him of his sting; yet the separations which his approach involved, and the momentous, though blessed consequences by which it was followed, would have cherished any sentiment rather than levity. She had endeavoured to familiarize her thoughts to the event of mortality, and to associate with it the incomparable promises of life and immortality; but there was still one view of it from which her reflections had uniformly recoiled; it was that which presented her with final separation from her *family*. She had resigned her worldly prospects, though to her hopeful and amiable mind they were highly interesting; she held her personal comforts in a perfectly loose hand to the will of Providence; life itself she could resign, though life still was sweet, and the dew of her youth was upon her; but how she should freely surrender her family she had hardly dared to think.

This was the point at which she now felt herself to be most vulnerable; she was grieved that she had so little power to dwell upon it; and she embraced this short interval in which most of the family were away from her, to seek, with greater hope, to wean her affections from those she most ardently loved. To a heart that lived in the love of others, this was a severe effort; and it frequently disturbed that serenity of mind which was otherwise possessed. However, nothing was to be so much dreaded as the least *allowed* unreadiness for the summons which might so suddenly call her away

and she gave herself to the struggle with many prayers and tears to Him who was able to deliver. She was heard in the thing in which she feared, as far as is consistent with our state of frailty. The very exercise, though so painful, brought its relief; she felt it was well that it was in her heart to have every attachment completely subordinated to the love of heaven; and, without loving her friends the less, she was assisted to associate the love of them more with another state of being, and with acquiescence to the divine appointments, all unknown as they were.

Little did I think, on returning to my sister's embraces in the opening of October, what had been the exercises of her mind; nor was there any thing to suggest them to my thoughts. Her spirit was filled with joy at our meeting, and her mind was marked with similar calm complacency as before our parting. I soon observed, indeed, that the expressions of love to the members of the family, though quite as powerful, were frequently not so unconstrained and easy as was habitual to her. Sometimes she would receive the winning attentions of the children with a tremour or a tear; and to us there was in her attachment something more tender and heavenly; but these variations failed to supply me with a key to their origin. They had this tendency the less, as Martha appeared to us decidedly better. The rosy hues of health sat firmer on her cheek, the light of life sparkled fuller in her eye, and she was disposed, by uttering the language of hope, to raise our gratification. Like her, I was disposed to speak of hope, for circumstances seemed to warrant it more than they had done for some time; but, unlike her, I was not at all in a state of preparation for these hopes being reversed.

Martha continued in her usual state over the second Sabbath in November; and, though a long winter was closing in around us, her mind seemed to receive no impression from it. On that Sabbath her sister, Mrs. R., happened to be detained by indisposition, and they passed it together. Martha appeared peculiarly to enjoy the day. In the evening they read largely in "Edwards on the

Affections." The subject was, the evidences of the Christian character; she entered most fully into it, and spoke with more freedom than she had ever done, of the connection of those evidences with her personal experience. The subject grew in her hands; while she communed with her friend the fire burned; and, with an eminent unction, she dilated on the method of redemption and the glories of an unseen world. The time sped hastily away; the family met around her bed; the prayer was offered; the evening hymn was sung; and Martha parted from the several members, pronouncing that peace on them which she herself shared so largely.

On the following Tuesday I joined the family. Martha was unwell; she ascribed it to a cold, and expressed a hope that in a day or two it would pass off. Nevertheless, her animal spirits were more than usually affected as the day closed. I spent the evening in her chamber, and with playfulness of remark endeavoured to revive them. The least attentions of mine were never lost on so devoted a sister; and she rose above bodily sensations to exercise those relative sympathies which were now as natural as instinct, and dearer far than life. On the Wednesday I left her again for the post of public duty; but without the least uneasiness on account of this variation in her health.

Yet this attack was more serious than I reckoned; and Martha, from the first, though unwilling to awaken the fears of others, was disposed to look at it in the most solemn light. No sooner had her brother departed than her forced spirits left her; and finding herself really worse, she expressed her mind freely to her sister and Maria, who were constantly with her. "I have had," she observed, "many warnings, but this I believe is the summons. I am much induced to think so from this circumstance—that I have long been anxious for my mind to be prepared for death, before it should be permitted to come; and, notwithstanding all my afflictions, I have never felt *entirely* resigned to it till *now*; and now I trust I am. But these," she continued, seeing her friends affected by her announcement, "are only my impressions,

and I may be wrong;" and then she enlarged on the foundation of hope which the Gospel furnished in the time of dissolution, with a rich confidence in its sufficiency. "What," she said in conclusion, with peculiar earnestness, "what could philosophy and all the expedients of philosophy do for me now? To a *dying* sinner, they are less than nothing and vanity!"

The remainder of the day was spent under the most solemn and interesting impressions. Two or three favourite chapters in Mrs. More's "Practical Piety" were read, and became food for conversation; and at her particular request they sang, as part of the evening devotions, Simeon's Hymn, in Dr. Watts's version.

Thursday and Friday were looked to for the signs of amendment, but Martha became worse; and so much were the family alarmed, that on the evening of the latter day it was thought needful to send a messenger to me. It was late before the tidings reached me; but I could not suffer myself to lose any time in departing for Cheshunt. The night itself was a memorable one. The rain fell in sudden torrents to the ground; the sheet lightning, though so far in the year, gleamed over the gloomy heavens, and made the darkness sensible; the rains had fallen so copiously that the waters were flowing like a river over the roads to a surprising extent and depth, and with such velocity as, at one period, effectually to resist our progress. However, our cattle were good, our errand was urgent, and we persevered, and were successful. All that night were not so favoured. A horse and his rider who passed us, were swept away by the current which we overcame, and quickly perished.

There was something in the character of the night that agreed with my feelings; and which, while it harmonized with them, strengthened them. I reached the cottage in alarm, and hastened to the well-known chamber of the sufferer. She had fallen into sleep—this was a comfort to me. But in a few days, a few hours, what an alteration! The bloom had faded from her cheek; pain was busy on her countenance; in her sleep she was still a sufferer. It was an affecting sight! I

turned from it to her window. The waning moon looked troubled through the watery clouds; the dying winds were moaning in the naked trees; the faded leaves were now and then rustling to the ground; the distant clock was telling out the last hour of time. "Every thing," I thought, "yes, *every thing* speaks of death!"

The following morning brought no relief to our fears. The medical attendant, though unwilling to give us uneasiness, could not encourage hope. I hastened to Martha's side, seeking and yet dreading an interview. We met in silence, and exchanged looks and embraces. Suffering as she was, she arose on her pillows to receive me, and seemed almost dead to the sense of pain in the intentness of the mind.

I inquired how she had passed the night.

"I have had," she replied, "a *wretched night.*"

"That night," I observed, "is now gone."

"Yes, gone *for ever*, and the Lord has helped me. He is righteous and good, and will, I trust, be with me to the end!"

"O brother!" she continued, with a look of peculiar earnestness, "that is a beautiful prayer: 'Most merciful Saviour, suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee!'"

This allusion to her personal state shook my command over my feelings; and to avoid disturbing her serenity at such a crisis, I retired to a distant part of the room. It was evident, however, that she was desirous of discharging her thoughts while she could; and, unfitted as I was for the trial, I necessarily obeyed her bidding, and returned to her side.

"O brother!" she said, "it is *so* different to behold death near us and at a distance—*so very different!* The longest life, I now find, is too short to prepare to die; after all, the circumstances are *so new* and *so trying!*"

"O that I could give the views I now have to others! Those views which a death-bed furnishes—of the nature of personal piety—of the awfulness of eternity—of the importance of salvation by Jesus Christ—and of the value of religion in early life—*especially in early life!*

"O it is most important for the work to be begun in our early days, before we are brought into the conflict of death! Religion, if really found on a dying bed, must have so much to contend with that is quite uncongenial with itself—such pride, such passion, such self-will, such habits of evil—as must make it very awful! The mind must be often in terrible doubt and darkness! —If it is not so, it must be by an *extraordinary* act of grace, which, though it may occur, we have no right to expect.

"I trust I know in whom I have believed; but all that I have known and experienced of the Saviour's grace, I have sometimes found only just enough to sustain and encourage me! Last night the agonies of the body were so great as, for a time, to affect the mind—my feet seemed quivering as I stood on the brink of Jordan! but the Lord strengthened me! Blessed be his name!—I *know* him—he will not forsake me—he will be with me in the swellings of Jordan!"

On observing my distress, she readily changed the course of her remarks, and, with a mixture of confidence and tenderness, continued—"What a mercy that we have lived together so happily—that we have understood each other so well—that we have had such opportunities of forming an affection which will never be broken—no, brother, *never be broken!* I feel assured that our love shall be continued and perfected in heaven. We shall only be separated as for a moment—and then —*then* we shall meet before the throne never to part!" Her thoughts dwelt upon the assurance with delight.

"O how little have I done for the cause of my Saviour! I did hope my life would have been spared to be useful to others; but Jehovah has appointed otherwise, and I bow to his will! I cannot now serve him by my life; I pray that I may yet do it by my death. *O that my death may be made eminently useful*—that it may constrain many to work while it is called to-day —that it may quicken many to thoughtfulness and prayer!

"And, perhaps, in that world to which I am going, I

may be *useful* as well as happy. I shall be, my Saviour says, as the angels in heaven; and they are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. Dear brother!" said she, touched by the thought, "perhaps, perhaps it may still be my privilege to hover about your ways, to contribute in some mode or other to your comfort and your usefulness. When I am gone, O do not think of me as *afar off*, but as near to you, as watching over you, as soon to join again for ever!"

"O my dear, dear brother, do not weep—do not weep—that will break my heart! If you knew all I have suffered, you would earnestly pray for my dismissal—indeed you would. I would not advert to any thing that should give you a moment's pain; but I am desirous that you should know that I am happy—yes, notwithstanding all I suffer—*that I am happy*—that religion makes me so—that God does support me. *This will be a comfort to you at a future time.*

"O all of you should join with me in praising the Saviour! I have been so afraid of dishonouring him—I hope he has kept me from this! Blessed be his name!—so good—so kind—*infinitely* faithful—to *me*, the meanest and the least in his family! O God! O *my* God!

I was fearful that she would suffer from exertion, and motioned her to take rest. She took the hand that was extended towards her, and pressing it to her lips, remained silent, but evidently in mental prayer.

Soon she turned a look of concern on me, and said, "Brother, there is one thing—Maria—" but she was too much exhausted to explain. It was not necessary. I understood at once that she would have referred to the distress which would arise to her devoted young friend by this visitation, and implored my kindness and protection in her favour. Accustomed as she was to read her brother's countenance, she saw there, troubled as it was, a reply to her anxious request, which gave her satisfaction. Her eyes smiled upon me; she covered my hand with kisses; and sunk down on her couch, faintly

saying, "My dear brother, my dear brother, thou hast been precious to me—precious to me!"

Later in the day, she disposed of every thing that belonged to her, naming distinctly most of her young friends, and putting aside, with her own hand, some token of friendship, or dictating some affectionate message which might make a useful impression. This was done with the greatest calmness, and designedly in my absence; and when she observed that her sister and Maria were affected by it, she looked on them with inexpressible sweetness, and said, "But mind, I am doing all this only in case I do not get better."

Then came the children of our family whom she so much loved, but from whom it was now necessary for her to separate. The youngest, still an infant, was expressly a miniature likeness of herself, with the only, but affecting difference, that the one was the opening, the other the fading flower. The little creature, quite insensible to the occasion, laughed, and cooed, and shook its tiny hand, as it was accustomed to do on retiring to its rest. She pressed it warmly to her bosom, and then forced it from her embraces for ever.

The second child approached her with similar playfulness; but when he found she was not able to return it, concern gathered on his features, as he observed, "Aunt Martha poorly."—"Yes, my dear," she replied; "aunt Martha poorly—but soon be better." She embraced him; put her hand upon him, and breathed out her blessing.

Andrew, who had received so much of her care, stood at her bedside, somewhat alarmed, and scarcely knowing why. She was anxious to prevent his receiving any unpleasant impression from the idea of death. "Andrew, my dear little Annew," she said, "I love you very much; but I am going away from you for a while; God is pleased to take me to heaven, that happy place above the bright blue sky. And, perhaps, I may still know how my Annew behaves; and if he is good and kind, it will please me, and when he dies God will take him to heaven, that happy place, and then we shall live

together for ever." She closed her eyes, folded her hands, and earnestly prayed—"O my Saviour! enlighten his understanding, draw his affections to thyself, make him useful to thee, and the joy of his parents!"

The last act of departure from the room was abrupt. It was too painful for any of us quietly to witness; and, by the emotion that played about Martha's lips, I saw that the scene was too trying to be protracted.

The interview had fixed itself on the mind of our eldest child. He remained silent and thoughtful for the residue of the evening. There was an assurance of happiness, and an appearance to the contrary, which perplexed him. As his mother was attending him to his sleeping room, he heard his aunt groan under a paroxysm of pain, which urged him to an inquiry that revealed the complexion of his thoughts—"But, I say, mamma, if heaven is such a happy place, why do people *groan* in going to heaven?"

The following morning she expected would bring her parents. She desired, but dreaded it. She was earnest in prayer that she and they might be supported in the meeting. They arrived. I did what I could so to prepare and guard them for the interview, that Martha's mind might be as little discomposed as possible. But who or what shall prepare a devoted parent to look on a devoted child in such circumstances, for the first time, with tranquillity?

Her fond mother first hastened to her presence with fixed purposes of suppressing her feelings while there; but scarcely had her affectionate eye glanced on her changed countenance before her sorrows overcame her, and she fled from her chamber to weep at liberty, exclaiming, "It's a lost case! O it is a lost case! my child, my child!"

Her venerable father followed. He stood before her in speechless misery. An effort was made to speak, but his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, and the lips quivered with excitement. She seized his hand and saluted it, and broke the silence which it was so hard to endure. "Father, my dear father! It has pleased the

Great Disposer of all events that you should commit my spirit to his hands. It is well! Lay it not to heart, father! It is the will of God! and his will is good and wise! I shall be taken the earlier from a world of sin and misery. We are both, I trust, bound to one place, and it matters very little, father, which of us arrive first. I shall be waiting to welcome you to the habitation of God, and our separation will be but for a moment—'a moment, or eternity's forgot!' My dearest father, do not fret! we must not fret! Come, let us take our harps from the willows, and to the praise of grace divine bid every string—every string—yes, every string awake!"

Her father still stood before her with features burdened with wo; he could not at once overcome the shock he had received. Martha was moved by it.

"Father!" she said.

He turned a troubled look upon her.

"Could you pray with me, dearest father?"

He shook his head in speechless agony.

She saw that she had asked too much at this moment, and that he would best recover himself by retiring from her chamber.

As her father left the room her mind was in the act of worship, as if to regain the composure which had been shaken, and which she feared to lose, waiting as she was for the hourly appearance of her Saviour.

"Now," she said, alluding to these interviews with her family, "the *bitterness of death is past!* Lord, I have waited for thy salvation! 'Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'" Her thoughts were soon restored to rest on their chosen centre, and they were evidently wrapped in joyful anticipations of eternal blessedness! "O heaven, heaven, heaven!" she exclaimed, "O the moment that will *succeed* to death!"

Her pains increasing on her, she repeated the following lines, to which she was partial, with a most gentle and resigned voice:—

I would not contend with thy will,
Whatever that will may decree
But O may each trial I feel
Unite me more firmly to Thee!

'Tis better to suffer and die
Beneath thy compassionate rod,
Than find my enjoyments run high,
But never have Thee for my God.

Her mother had now resumed her post at her side for the night; and Maria, on the other hand, was at her request reading and singing alternately. These exercises were continued till, wearisomeness gaining an ascendency even over pain, she fell into temporary repose.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CLOSING SCENES. 1821.

It will have been apparent, that none of our family were at all prepared to expect the event which I am recording but my sister—and that she was in a wonderful state of preparation. An hour that often steals insensibly on the wisest and the best, was not allowed to surprise her. She was, indeed, a wise virgin; she neither slumbered nor slept; her hopes were all awake; her oil was in her lamp, and it was trimmed, lighted, and burning brightly.

I had always considered Martha remarkably in habitual readiness for an exchange of worlds, and the later advances in her Christian character had disposed me to think it would nobly meet such a trial; but all that I had admitted on the subject was far outdone by the reality. The first impression I received in my interview with her can never be lost; it is one of those recollections which, however distant in time, will still be near to consciousness. Though, in so short an interval, her flesh had actually sunk, her very person struck me as of greater size than it had previously at-

tained. But the effect was produced by an enlargement of mind, not of body. Such superiority to life, such elevation of soul, such unclouded faith, such living hope, such a sense of the presence of heaven and eternity, while it was consoling to the uttermost, was really oppressive by its sublimity. In her upward flight I felt that she had already left me far behind; she was surrounded by a light and glory which I could not reach; she was welcoming an event which overwhelmed me in distress; her very love and tenderness to me had more of angelic condescension than of human frailty about them; she seemed to be standing at the very gates of heaven, expecting each moment they might be thrown open, and the hands of ministering spirits might usher her to the presence of her Lord.

It was a great source of lamentation, that I was not in a state of mind more congenial to her own at this period. But, while I had often thought anxiously and seriously of Martha's indisposition, I had always shunned anticipating a fatal termination; and this sudden change in her situation fell on me like a thunderstroke from heaven. I was called to yield unexpectedly an object, which had intwined itself about the heart by innumerable ties, and I could not do it. The want of resignation to the event unfitted me for giving the devoted sufferer what assistance I might in her mortal struggle. I felt that I ought to read with her, to unite with her in prayer, to speak to her the words of comfort, and to animate her in conquering every thing that held her to earth and life; but, no—I could not do it. She was obliged to seek all this from other lips than her brother's: and I was sadly displeased with myself. The more I saw of her excellence, the less could I exercise of submission; the more slender the ties by which I held her, the more tenacious was the grasp. My earthly sorrows appeared almost to profane her presence; and that I might not wound a peace which I was not qualified to confirm, I frequently retired from her chamber and all human intercourse, into the garden; maintaining, as I unconsciously paced its paths, great strife of spirit, sin-

cerely desirous, I hope, to give her up to the hand of Providence, and yet unable to loose my hold on her. It was well for me that, at such a moment, she was not actually removed!

Providence had appointed, that if Martha was to die "a happy death," it should owe nothing of its happiness to the slightness of bodily suffering, or the free action of untried graces. Her fortitude, her patience, her faith were to be exercised to the very uttermost; and it was to be shown that they were separate from, and could triumph over, the body's deepest distress.

Contrary to all expectation, the fever which threatened the instant danger abated considerably in its violence. Ready as we were to catch at the shadow of amendment, hope partially revived, and our minds fell from the intensity of fear into the fluctuations of suspense. How did we wait for the regular arrivals of the medical attendant! How did we hang upon his lips for the few words he was to utter as words of life and death! How were we driven to and fro by the impulses of hope and fear, as the symptoms of disease rose or subsided! However, this interval, though full of suffering, afforded our afflicted family time for prayer and reflection; exercises which, if they were desirable to all, I felt to be most necessary to myself.

The variations which brought to us something of hope, afforded Martha only disappointment. She had been standing as on an eminence, beholding the unclouded prospects of her fair inheritance, and she would willingly, like Moses, have died there; but it was the will of her heavenly Leader that yet again she should descend into the valley, where, through the infirmities of the flesh, her prospects would often be beclouded, and sometimes eclipsed. To this will she devoutly submitted. In exaltation her mind had remained sober; in her depression it remained confident: the body might fluctuate, but the soul continued fully fixed on God, fully expectant of that hour which, though hidden from her knowledge, was present to her watchfulness.

To preserve this simplicity of attention undisturbed as

much as possible, she declined seeing any friends except the members of her family, and one or two as familiar as they; while she entertained a most grateful sense of the sympathy and kindness the whole neighbourhood was disposed to manifest. She improved her hours, as her state allowed, in devotional reading and singing, frequently attempting to join in part of a hymn; and if her thoughts were at liberty to pass from herself to the world, it was exclusively on their accustomed errands of benevolence. The following quotations from her conversation about this time, are illustrations to the point.

Alluding to the delay in her anticipated removal, "This," she said, "is mysterious: I had hoped it would be otherwise; but *it is right.* If I am kept here, it is for some good end. Perhaps it is that I may be more *useful.* Pray that my death may be useful, and that patience may have its *perfect* work."

She named some young friends who had shown her kind attentions, with great affection, and said—"Eliza, I have particularly to request you will write to them, and let them know my condition. Tell them that they have been much on my mind and in my prayers for months past. Assure them that, in all I have suffered, I have felt more powerfully than ever the *value*, the *necessity* of real religion; and urge them, in the *strongest terms,* to flee from the world and its vanities, and devote themselves *early*, *decidedly* to the Saviour!"

"Give my Christian regards to the students, and tell them to persevere amid all discouragements, and to carry the Gospel, the pure Gospel, wherever they can. Let them be prudent, but let them fear nothing—except it be sin—remembering that they will be extensively either a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. Tell them to think, always to think, of the *infinite value of an immortal soul.*"

"Give, brother," she said to me, "my dying love to the teachers of the Sabbath-school, and tell them I now think with pleasure of my engagements with them in instructing the ignorant and the poor; that a dying bed

makes these services appear not less, but more important and interesting; and that I hope, since my efforts were so quickly ended, they will be anxious to supply my lack of service Give my love also to *all the young people*, and assure them that, whatever their hearts may say, or their companions suggest, there is nothing like *early* piety. I am thankful for many, many things, but *chiefly for this*. They wish to be happy; but tell them from me, *that no life can be happy but as it is spent in communion with God and devotedness to him.*"

This comparative suspension of acute suffering continued only for a few days; and, while it lasted, like the pause between two opposing powers, neither of which is victorious, it was ominous of more fixed and fatal conflict. Disease and death were resisted by a fine constitution, in the very verdure and energy of life; but, alas! the power of nature to resist was in this case only an awful capacity to endure the utmost portion of anguish. Her inward foes fixed on the vital parts, and the struggle continued and increased day after day, night after night, till it became even dreadful! Unceasing restlessness, delirious pain, deathlike sickness, writhing convulsions, by turns and together, shook the whole frame with unspeakable violence. But it must not be dwelt upon even in a distant recollection! It is sufficient to say, that such were the agonies at the crisis of this attack, that for eight-and-forty hours no sleep could be secured to the tormented sufferer, by the freest administration of the most potent opiates!

If it was painfully astonishing to behold what the body could suffer and yet live, it was divinely great and edifying to see how the spirit could sustain it. The storm, dreadful as it was, was limited to the grosser elements of her nature; beyond them all was still clear and tranquil. The mind might occasionally be obscured by bodily suffering, or bewildered by the illusions of bodily senses, or shut up and hidden amid bodily infirmities; but when it appeared it was still the same mind—placid, confiding—alive, indeed, to a sense of suffering, yet superior to all that oppressed it. Her own language

will give the best representation, though it is broken and uttered at intervals.

"O, Eliza," she said to her sister, "I never thought it would come to this—so helpless—so inanimate—such pain!"

On being asked if she was happy, "Yes," she replied, "I am in *exquisite* pain, but *free from care and alarm.*"

"I hope," her sister remarked, "we shall meet in heaven." "O yes!" she replied, "and soon!—It will not do to cast away our confidence, nor to be tossed to and fro with every wind and wave."

"I have been praying," she said, "that, if it were the Lord's will, he would cut short my suffering, and take me to himself; nevertheless, not my will, but his be done. If God is glorified, that is every thing."

"O this is a bitter cup—a bitter cup! Thou, O Lord, art righteous and true. Thou art my rock—there is no unrighteousness in thee. In faithfulness and in love hast thou afflicted me!"

"O this is trying, very trying! Forbid, my Saviour, that, through these pains, I should for a moment dishonour thee! and let me esteem it my greatest honour to bear whatever thou shalt see fit to lay upon me!"

"O my weariness, my restlessness! How I long to get home! I thought my heavenly Father would have taken me home ere this—but it is otherwise. O my God, may I remain here to strengthen the faith of those around me—to glorify thee by my keen anguish! That is what I desire—yes, that is what I desire—*to glorify thee!*"

"Maria, read to me—read some chapters and some prayers, and sing; I want all the help I can get now; I cannot even think for myself." The Scriptures and prayer at the end of Doddridge's Rise and Progress were read, and afterward the 23d Psalm. She took up the language of the 4th verse—"I will fear no evil; no, why should I fear? Thou art with me, and wilt comfort me!—but it is a *dark* valley—*yet* I will fear *no* evil!"

Her friend remarked, "A Christian has comparatively little to fear."

"Ah, my dear," she replied quickly, "that is because you do not know what it is to die! Death, at the very best, is an awful thing, and nature shudders at it. But," lifting her eyes to heaven, "I will fear *no* evil; Thou art *indeed* with me—Thou wilt bring me safely through!"

"O my Saviour," she prayed in strong agony, "Thou art full of compassion! Take me from this state of suffering, or give me patience to wait and bear it!"

It was remarked, "That it was a great blessing rather to *desire* death than to *dread* it."

"Ah," she replied, "*there is my danger!* I fear I may desire it too much, and so become impatient. I would not wish for any thing, only that God may be glorified in my suffering, or in my dying."

From this time she was not heard to utter one desire for her deliverance, however submissively; only that *faith* and *patience* might be granted.

"O pray for me—pray for me, that I may trust in God—simply trust in him. There is nothing like a simple dependance on the Saviour as a sinner—*nothing but a sinner!*"

"I never before felt the meaning of those words which the Saviour uttered, 'My soul is *exceeding sorrowful* even unto death.' Ah, *exceeding sorrowful*, and very heavy. I never before saw its meaning—*sorrowful* and *very heavy:* I understand it, but I cannot tell you any thing about it—*very heavy!*"

"And we feel," I said, "my dear, all the benefit of the Saviour's sorrows."

"So oppressive were his sorrows," she continued, still dwelling on the words, "that it was necessary to send an angel from heaven to strengthen him."

"And," I observed, "they are all ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation."

"Yes, they are!" she replied with earnestness, dwelling on it for some time, and then continuing: "Brother! notwithstanding all my affliction, *I am happy*. I have no wants—no fears! I had, indeed, a hard struggle to give up life without having done something more for my Saviour. I wished, had it been his will, to live to be

useful; but now *his will is my will.* My soul doth magnify the Lord, and rejoice, yea, exceedingly rejoice, in his salvation! It is enough—quite enough! 'Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have beheld thy salvation.'"

"O brother, my soul is in bitterness—such pain! But the Lord is righteous—he is good."

"Yes, my dear, good when he gives, supremely good."

"Nor less," she replied, taking up the words; "nor *less* when he *denies.*"

"And yet," she continued, "it is mysterious, is it not? To think how easily dear Miss Weybridge was dismissed; just walking across the room, and then lying gently down to die! How different is my situation! But I *am sustained—just sustained!*"

"And *will* be sustained, my dear! and the more we are called to suffer, the more the strength of divine grace is manifested in supporting us; and the more, therefore, God is glorified in us."

"Yes, brother! let God be glorified, whether by suffering, or life, or death!"

"O brother, I am so frail—so helpless—so very helpless! In these deep waters, I often seem just like Peter, ready to sink; and, like him, I cry, 'Lord, save, or I perish!'"

"But you did not, like him, challenge Providence."

"No, no, brother; the Lord brought me here, and he supports me, and will support me!"

"O I cannot sufficiently admire the Saviour, who, in such circumstances as his, could say, 'Not my will, but thine be done!' He was *human* as well as divine; he saw *all* his sufferings beforehand; and his sufferings were every way peculiar and inconceivable; and he felt every thing as we do; and he said, 'Not my will, but thine be done!' O what resignation!"

"I have had a night of dreadful pain. It has been as though every joint and nerve in the body were rent asunder. I have not so much as the tip of the finger free from pain. I never could have thought the body was capable of so much suffering."

Fearing that this language might be mistaken for complaint, she continued—"This is better than I deserve; this is better than the pleasures of the world and of sin; this is nothing to what my Saviour suffered; his were the sufferings of the *soul*—mine are those of the *body*. O praise him, for he is good; his mercy endureth for ever—praise him—praise him!"

But all this cannot so fully reveal the serenity and composure of her spirit as the interest she still took in the welfare and even transitory feelings of others; and her watchfulness over herself in her conduct towards them. In her most pungent sufferings, there was the same disregard of herself, the same consideration and love of others. It was really surprising!

In a most severe paroxysm of pain, she said—"I have been fearing lest my sufferings should cause any who see them, or may hear of them, to stumble; but remember, this is my dying testimony—'*Behold, happy is the man whom the Lord correcteth!*'"

On hearing her nurse, who was affected by her torments, say—"Dear creature, she will have had all her sufferings in this life."—She immediately took it up, and with peculiar earnestness replied, "No, nurse, that is a fatal deception! Our dependance must be, not on our own sufferings, but on the sufferings of Christ. We all deserve to suffer for ever, and if we escape this, it must be by the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember, nurse, *by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as penitent sinners! no other way!*"

In the midst of most violent pain, she turned to Maria, and said, "Mind, my dear, above all things, that you seek to be *rooted* and *grounded* in the faith. You will surely want it when you come to this. O it is a solemn thing to step from one world to another! we can never take such another step—so solemn! See that you are ready for it. Walk, my dear Maria, near to God, walk circumspectly—be familiar with another world—the end of all things is at hand—think of me!"

On being partially relieved from agony, which brought on delirium, she exclaimed, scarcely recovered to her

thoughts—"There, now tell my dearest mother I am better!"

In similar circumstances, fearing she might, without knowing it, have uttered what she would not approve, she looked kindly on her attendants, and said, "I hope I have not spoken *sharply*."

So far was she from this, that her whole conduct was marked with the greatest gentleness. She resigned herself to the most trying measures, for the satisfaction of her friends, when she had relinquished all hope of recovery; and the smallest attentions were sure to be met with kind acknowledgments.

On being told that her brother was coming to her room, after a long and heavy conflict, she immediately said, still alive to all the delicacies of her sex—"Then, Maria, do see that the room is in order, and—my person? Is that nice and becoming?—Do put me to rights—that I know will please my dear brother!"

I had now obtained more of self-command, and was much with my sister; and though she had wonderful power to restrain her feelings when I was present, it was impossible not to be acutely affected by her afflictions

These afflictions, continuing day after day, and each day with more hopelessness, could not be desired. I could not, indeed, bring myself to utter such words, but the inward sentiment of the heart was, "that if life could only be held on such terms, life itself, dear as it was, might terminate." So may we be brought to ask, what, of all other things, we dreaded to realize!

On entering her chamber at this time, I took my seat by her side, and gave her some cider, the only thing she could now take—"Brother," she said, "*you* got me this cider—it is so acceptable!—Thank you, thank you. O how sweet is the kindness of friends! How great are my mercies!

"Is it not mysterious, brother, that I still am appointed to suffer?"

"Yes, my dear; but while we continue here, God has some end to answer by us."

"Yes, brother, *all is right!*"

"Now," I said, "we *believe* it; by-and-by we shall *see* it."

"O yes!" she replied; "*now* I must walk by faith—sense won't do *now—won't do now!*"

Gazing on her brother's averted and troubled features, she said, "Brother! It is such a pleasure to think of you."

"I am pleased that it is, my dear."

"That, brother, gives me greater pleasure still!"

"And this pleasure, I trust, will *never* be taken from us!"

"*Never—never!*" she replied with fervency.

But who shall successfully contend with death! The youngest and the strongest must utterly fail before his unsparing and all-powerful hand. The last and severest attack of disease was made early on the morning of December the eleventh; and I was suddenly called up to witness a struggle that was supposed to be fatal. But the voice was not in the storm. The divine goodness had graciously appointed (and I cannot sufficiently adore it) that the spirit, which was prepared meekly to *resign* its habitation at its Father's bidding, should not seem to be *forced* from it, amid the throes of convulsion and the wildness of delirium. Martha, after sustaining, in the spirit we have recorded, a desperate and heart-rending conflict, for most of this day, sunk into a deep sleep. This blessing had been long sought, but not found; and now it had come, it remained on her through the night, and the whole of the next day, till we began to tremble, lest, indeed, she should wake no more. However, on the evening of the twelfth, she awoke, greatly refreshed in spirit, and comparatively at ease in her body.

But the victory was gained. Death had subdued the earthly frame, and put his awful signature upon it. Fiery inflammation had done its work, and mortification was eating its way to the vital parts. The body, which had recently discovered such unnatural energy, was now powerless as earliest infancy. The lifeblood had fallen from the countenance; the shadows of death hung on

the eyelids; the lips refused all nourishment, except what could be conveyed to them on the head of a feather. How low, how very low we may be brought, before we are actually brought to the dust of death!

There was something strangely impressive in this change! The features were occasionally illuminated by the indwelling spirit, and then sunk again into darkness. The voice was now uttered under the breath, and was rather like a whisper from the grave than sound the human tongue can utter, so unearthly was it. And the whole form frequently appeared almost as without life; and when it was put in motion, it seemed to be more by the impulse of a living spirit on a dead body, than by the free use of any physical powers. Yet when the spirit could make itself expressed, through these dim and disordered bodily organs, it spoke of peace which pain could not destroy, of a life over which death had no power. The following are some of its brief and broken expressions, which are among the most precious and sacred things committed to memory's keeping.

Soon after her waking, desirous to have renewed testimony of her happiness, I asked, if she still felt sustained and comforted?

"Yes," she replied; "suffering and weakness affect the mind, and bring a cloud between me and every thing —I cannot dwell on things as I wish—but the foundation is the same—the foundation is the same—and that supports me—*the foundation of God standeth sure.*

"I have great reason to be very thankful for this relief—very thankful—O to praise Him!—help me to praise —I cannot praise—in Heaven!"

"Righteous is the Lord, and good—immensely good—he is become my salvation—to praise him!"

"Pray that my death may be more useful, much more useful, than my life!"

"One moment *after* death!"

"O Heaven—Heaven—Heaven!"

"Maria," she said, "talk to me about Heaven."

It was spoken of as a state of rest, happiness, and purity.

"Yes—yes," she replied to the several observations, with a most gentle and heavenly expression of countenance.

"Ah! Heaven!—I am going, I will not stay here!"

It was remarked—"There we shall see God!"

The words touched her soul; delight and love stood in her eyes—"*See God, see God*—tell me no more—"

She dwelt on it in silence, till her feeble powers were perplexed:—"Talk about it again," she said.

It was revived—her mind seized on it—"*See God!—ah!—yes!—do not say any more; it is too much!—Pray for patience.*"

On Saturday the fifteenth, Martha lay mostly in a state of insensibility. She received no refreshment, took no notice. In the afternoon, her anxious mother expressed a conviction that she would notice *me*, if I sought to call up her attention. I sat quietly at her side, and fanned her. I moistened her lips with the cider, to which she had been so partial. She revived. "*So sweet!*" she said—"*That kind hand!—my dearest brother!—I love to see you!—quite worn out!—*"

Soon afterward the tolling of the church bell caught her ear—"*That sweet bell—sweet bell!*" she said.

"*Brother, what is to-morrow?*"

"It is the Sabbath day, my dear!"

"*Yes, the Sabbath!*" she replied, as the smile of hope and peace softly glowed over the ruins of her outward features, and then forsook them for ever. She had frequently referred to this day, I learnt, as the day of her happy release.

The Sabbath came. There was an impression among us, made principally by Martha's allusions, which rendered the opening of this day most peaceful and solemn. We moved about without noise, spoke with a subdued voice, and took our refreshments as though we took them not. The dear patient (sufferer now no longer) remained through the early morning shut up from all surrounding objects. Her mother, exhausted by many nights' watching, I had urged to seek slight repose; the family went out to the house of prayer; I undertook, for the period,

the sole care of our common love. It was an opportunity I sought, but scarcely knew how to sustain. However, there were no symptoms of present alarm—my charge was as she had been through most of the night—feeling nothing, awake to nothing. I took the New Testament into my hand, that charter of our immortality; and to avoid my own reflections, read its blessed assurances. An unusual composure stole over my thoughts—they were following, in imagination, the spirit they loved into heaven's eternal mansions.

The body stirred, and called up my attention.

I hung over it, and explored the features, hoping yet for some sign of love and consciousness—but there was no spirit visible there!

"My dear!" I said.

Her eyes, still true to their love, wandered in search of their object—but no! the film of death hung too heavily upon them.

Disappointed at this, the hand which had seemed to be lifeless so long, made an effort to creep towards me.

The sight was too affecting. I put my hand into hers, and brought it on its way.

I pressed it.

It made a feeble and painful effort to return the pressure.

"My dear!" I repeated.

She made a last effort to raise her eyelids—but in vain!

Her lips moved, and I bent my ear for some expression of hope and peace.

"*My—brother!*"—they whispered.

Those gentle, affectionate, dying sounds will always dwell in my ear; but there was yet (I can scarcely tell why) *another name* I wished once more to pass those lips!

I said—"There is a name that is far dearer to you than even that of brother."

She made an effort to speak again—but the lips refused to do her bidding. I watched them intensely. They became fixed, and the eyelids had sunk to their former position!

I pressed my finger on her pulse. It came and went; it fluttered and faltered; it stopped and revived most ominously!

I was relieved by the arrival of the family. Her mother, Eliza, and Maria came into the chamber successively; and, without saying a word, they marked the change, and took their place beside me. It was a solemn hour. We could not move; could not speak; could not weep. We were standing on the verge of two worlds. This world never appeared so shadowy; heaven never appeared so near. It seemed as though a breath would waft aside the thin veil which separated us from eternity; and faith and imagination were alive to the presence of ministering spirits, who were expected each moment to convey a sister spirit to all the grandeur and blessedness which it can reveal.

The object of our motionless and fixed attention lay as in a profound sleep, only that the respiration was becoming longer and deeper. Our own breathing, by sympathy, was made more difficult.

It became deeper—and deeper—and deeper!

After each act of respiration, there was a dreadful hesitancy, whether it should be renewed any more!

It was renewed—once—and again—and then lost for ever!

That moment our breath was suspended—and all was still as death, silent as the grave.

The next minute we recovered our inspiration by an hysterical effort; trembling seized us; we fell back in our seats, and burst into a flood of tears.

We were, at length, interrupted by the arrival of the nurses. I was unwilling that strangers should enter the room, it seemed so heavenly; I could not bear that the body should be touched, it seemed so sacred. I waved my hand for them to depart; but, checked by recollecting that their offices were needful, we hastened from the spot, and mourned apart the common, the inexpressible visitation.

CHAPTER XXV.

LAST OFFICES. 1821.

On the next morning we arose to a sense of our situation. The habitation was darkened; and an air of gloom and desertion rested on all its apartments. We moved about it with a silent and smothered tread, as if we might still disturb the repose of our beloved relative. We feared to meet each other's look; and the loved name which filled our thoughts no one could venture to utter. The smiles and caresses of our children seemed unnatural and distressing to us; and, I believe, had we obeyed the impulse of personal feeling in this early stage of our grief, we should each one have sought a state of absolute seclusion.

But there were duties still to be paid to the deceased; and reverence and love urged us to discharge them without delay. Our minds, therefore, were quickly girded to their performance; and painful as they are, they seem designed by a compassionate Providence, at this period of deep distress, to temper and regulate those emotions which might otherwise work with destructive power.

Some of the earliest and least welcome duties, however, which properly attached to me, were as kindly as delicately anticipated by those who might well have shrunk from them. Yet, as the mind recovered a degree of tranquillity, I felt that sacred and final trusts were committed to my hands, which I ought not entirely to delegate to others; and that I should not be satisfied with myself, unless I became the witness of their having been executed. This impression, supported by the yearnings of a trembling affection to take a last look of a form so

unutterably dear, gave birth to a desire of visiting the chamber where it lay, before it should be for ever shut up from my sight.

It appeared essential to the accomplishment of this purpose, that it should be unobserved; and having sought for the occasion, I crept to the room as if detection would have made it really impossible. I approached the coffin. With a steady hand I gently pressed aside its cover. The first glimpse of the object for which the eye was searching, smote my hand and frame as by the shock of electricity. I recovered myself, and gazed on it for a moment. Those eyes, those ears, those hands had never been utterly insensible to me, and now they were so! It was not to be endured! The lid was hastily closed, and resting the arm upon it, I endeavoured to divert the course of thought by turning the eye on other things. But this room was associated with manifold recollections of the most cheerful, pleasant, and blessed kind; and now it presented a picture of the most entire desolateness. The domestic fire was extinguished, the carpets were taken up, the bed was removed. Its furniture was a coffin; its inhabitant a corpse; and the only sign of life about it was derived from a poor robin, which sat on the opened frame of the window, repeating his short wintry note, as if asking for food he had often received, but had now sought many days in vain. There was no relief to be found here. I hastened away to the garden, to regain the composure I had lost.

But the morning arrived on which the very remains of so valued a being were to be removed from our possession. It was a dreaded day. There was a feverish activity about the family, connected with an expression of our mutual wishes by signs rather than words, which intimated the suppression of feeling that would scarcely yield to the hand of government. Our friends, the Rev. Messrs. Kemp and Weybridge, with the male members of our families, assembled to perform the few last offices due to mortality. One of them sought to break the painful silence, while waiting for our summons, by remarking

to my father—"Well, my friend, God is lopping off the branches, that the trunk may fall the easier!"

"Lopping off the branches, indeed!" he replied, in so tremulous and sad a voice, as made us all seek refuge again in silence.

The arrangements were now complete, and we were called to take our place in them. There were, first of all, twelve children, who had been the latest scholars of the deceased, dressed in white. Close by the side of the body there was, unobtrusive and faithful, the lone widow in quiet sorrow; and around her, but a little distanced, were some female villagers with their children, all of whom were evidently interested in the occasion. Afterward came the mourners, who closed the simple procession. My attention was called up by my father, at whose side I stood. We had spared him suffering as much as possible through the past scenes; but this final service seemed to take the greater effect on him. His noble and revered frame, bending with age and shaken by present affliction, rocked and trembled so as to make me fear, that my efforts to steady his steps would not avail to support him through the trial.

We moved slowly, reluctantly forward. There was no noise, no disgusting indifference, no impertinent curiosity. The spectators showed their concern by silent sympathy; and if any of them spoke, it was with a soft voice, and mostly the record a full heart was disposed to make of the virtues or sufferings of the departed.

We entered the churchyard. We were received by the officiating minister, and passed into the church. The service began. Never did I listen to it with such ears. I had many times read, and had admired as often as I had read, the apostle's argument on the great doctrine of the resurrection; but if ever it is to be felt in all its force of proof, in all its exaltation of sentiment, in all its triumph of confidence, it must be when hanging over the relics of those we most have loved, and clinging to the hope of immortality as the only one that can abide with us amid the devastations of time and death.

We quitted the sanctuary for the spot where we were to deposite our sacred charge—a spot which the deceased had chosen. We met around the mouth of the grave, and beneath the shade of a spreading yew-tree. The coffin descended. The service went on. The fragments of earth fell on the surface with a rattling hollow sound, which affectingly proclaimed the nothingness of all earthly life, the vanity of all earthly hope. The "sure and certain hope" was expressed with the confidence of faith; the thanksgiving and the prayer were offered, and the act of solemn worship ceased.

We hung around the spot, as if it could not be forsaken. The children looked into the grave, and shed sincere and generous tears over their devoted instructer. The good mothers expressed their emotion, either by uttering their blessings on her memory, or averting their countenances, which were too much distressed for inspection. The widow stood gazing with features full of resigned sorrow, which seemed to say, "I have lost a friend, and I shall never find such another." Her father resolved on one last look; and, deeply groaning, turned away for ever. For myself, my courage failed me; I feared to look at all; and in moving from the place, I found myself involuntarily endeavouring to assuage rebellious feeling, by repeating the words, "In sure and certain hope! in sure and certain hope!"

Yet, however willing to stay, it was necessary for us to depart. We allowed ourselves to be put in our former melancholy order, and moved from the sacred enclosure. There, where Tillotson has preached, where Watts has studied, where Mason sleeps—there, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest—there we left the precious remains, sustained by the gracious assurances of Him who watches over the dust of his saints, and who has promised to raise, glorify, and immortalize it. The particular place at which it reposes is marked by a plain tablet, which bears the following inscription:

M. R.
OBT. DEC. 16, 1821, ÆT. 28.
TO THE STRANGER,
HER VIRTUES
CANNOT BE KNOWN;
TO HER FRIENDS,
HER MEMORY
IS HER BEST EPITAPH.

On arriving at the cottage, there was yet another duty to be discharged before we separated. Martha, in disposing of what belonged to her, had assigned a portion of her circulating books to the children who were now with us, appointing a particular book to each child. They were, therefore, arranged in the hall; and the books were presented to them in her name, with a request that they would not part with them. One of my ministering brethren very kindly gave them a brief and appropriate address, while the other offered for them earnest and affectionate prayer. The tender, sympathetic, and solemn allusions made in these services to the deceased, went direct to the hearts of the children, and they indulged themselves in the unconstrained expressions of their grief. It was a very affecting close of most affecting engagements.

In the decline of the day we hastened to town, and prepared ourselves as we could to seek, on the approaching Sabbath, the improvement of the event, in the more trying and public service of the sanctuary. On the afternoon of the day Dr. Winter* commended the bereaved family to the divine pity and blessing; and sought to render the impressive dispensation beneficial to a crowded and deeply interested auditory, from these words, "*It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in*

* The bereavement was also improved the same day by the Cheshunt ministers, and the Rev. T. West, of Barking, the residence of my parents; to them, and to the extended circle of sympathizing friends, who sought by the kindest attention to lighten the burden of the sufferer or of the survivers, the writer tenders his respectful but cordial acknowledgments. May they find comforters, kind and true, in their adversity!

his youth. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." It is needless to say, that the reflections which were grounded on this passage were such as well illustrated and forcibly applied its important doctrine; and it will be at once apparent, that the words themselves could not have been better adapted to the occasion, had they been selected by those who knew most of the deceased.

The solemn duties of the temple terminated; and in the evening I was glad, under the influence of suppressed feeling, to seek the relief of retirement. I had necessarily been much with others; now I was alone. I had had a distinct object before me, and had struggled against emotion, that I might not be disqualified for paying those last offices to the dear departed which I had determined to render; but, now every thing was done, the bracing power of resolution was lost, and the reflections wandered at liberty over all that had transpired. Thought was busy in dwelling on the more recent and distant scenes of her life. Our infantile sympathies—our childish amusements—our youthful perplexities—our matured affection—our Christian communion—were all surprisingly present to the mind. Then it was that I felt the kindred ties of blood, the dearest attachments of the heart, were rudely burst asunder; that she, who had been cherished on the same bosom, and reposed in the same cradle—that she, who had shared in my earliest recollections, my best enjoyments, my deepest affections—that she, who had grown up by my side, shedding the light, and love, and gladness of her presence around me, till it seemed almost the necessary element of my existence—that my sister, my only sister, was no more—that an irreparable breach had been made in the series of my relationships—that I was *sisterless*, and that I could never be otherwise!

But these reflections would mix themselves with others which served to qualify them. It was impossible to separate Martha's life from the presence of religion; or to revert to the final scenes of suffering without receiving a triumphant testimony to the power of godli-

ness. Here the lacerated heart found consolation. Imagination turned from privation, anguish, and death, to follow the living and emancipated spirit springing to the light of heaven, clad in the glory of heaven, and keeping heaven's eternal Jubilee with God, and the Lamb, and all the sanctified. The mind seemed present to the society and blessedness it contemplated. The tender request of the departing saint—"*Do not think of me, brother, as far away!*" came softly over the memory, and supplied the last drop to the overflowing emotions of the heart.—There is a balm most fragrant and salutary in those tears which nature sheds and religion sanctifies.

Winter has returned again, and again departed; but we are still a mourning family; and the sense of our loss will often cross the current of our thoughts when they are seeking recreation, or intent on the busy duties of life. The beloved name has indeed been given to an infant born to us since the removal of our relative; but the heart cannot so be cheated. There is a void in our circle, and about our cottage, which Martha only could fill. Her smiles, her words, her handiwork, are associated with every thing and every apartment of the place; and tell us of enjoyments that are past never to be restored!

Time, however, has so softened grief, that it has now little to distress, nothing to alarm, reflection. It is of a quiet, soothing, and often, I trust, of an elevating character. Martha lived a saint, and died a saint; and, now that the first flow of sorrow is past, the impression of her life and death is most saintly and blessed. The house in which she dwelt is the more dear for having had her as its inhabitant; the paths she loved to tread are the more pleasant because she has trod them; the garden she admired is the more beautiful for having given her pleasure; her flowers, the only living memento of her lovely but frail existence, are the more precious for reminding us of her; and in the very chamber and on the very

pillows where she resigned her spirit into the hands of her Saviour, I now frequently lay me down to repose, with a sense of serenity and peace never connected with the spot before.

Similar impressions happily extend even to our children, from their partial remembrances. The eldest, when anxious to give his full commendation to any real or supposed excellence, declares, *it is like aunt Martha.* And his younger brother, as if sympathizing in our seriousness, would sometimes arrest himself in his gambols, and pointing to the blue sky, would say, with his broken utterance, "*Aunt Martha gone up to heaven—me go to aunt Martha!*"

The memory of the just is blessed! It softens the heart, elevates the eye, strengthens the hand, sanctifies the soul. It is the voice of God proclaiming to us peace in this life, joy in the life to come. It has often been enshrined in the breast of infancy as the seeds of a future and glorious life; and has sometimes made its way to the heart, which had shown itself preoccupied by worldly care and earthly enjoyment against all common remonstrance and entreaty. *The memory of the just is blessed!*

FARE THEE WELL! FARE THEE WELL!
IT IS SWEET TO THINK OF THEE!
OF THY WORK OF FAITH,
LABOUR OF LOVE, AND PATIENCE OF HOPE;
OF THY DELIVERANCE
FROM
DEATH, SUFFERING, AND SIN;
OF THY
ADMISSION TO
THE SONGS, THE JOYS, THE REST
OF THE BLESSED,
SURROUNDED BY HEAVEN'S RADIANT GLORY,
AND DWELLING
BENEATH THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY
IT IS SWEET TO THINK OF THEE!
FARE THEE WELL! FARE THEE WELL!
I WOULD EVER THINK THOU ART HAPPY!
NEVER THINK THOU ART GONE!

READER;

I have now accomplished, with what ability I might, my painfully pleasing task of introducing you to an intimate knowledge of a relative who was dear, unutterably dear while living, and whose memory is made divinely sacred by the solemn and final transformations of death. It is neither accordant with my wishes nor my taste to close this narrative by burdening your attention with all the inferences, in formal succession, which it might sufficiently justify. But, on the other hand, I cannot feel at liberty entirely to resign this record to your hands, without pressing on your thoughts the importance of a personal and practical application of the lessons it unfolds or suggests. If virtue has been exhibited, it is that it may be reproduced and invigorated in you; if natural defect of character has been acknowledged, it is, that in coming to a wise sense of your own deficiencies, you may not be seduced into despondency; and if the gradual conquest of these infirmities has been traced to the corresponding influence of vital religion, it is that you might have greater solicitude awakened for those influences, which alone can effectually guard, and sanctify, and exalt the mind.

The question, then (forgive its freedom in its kind intention), which I am anxious earnestly to propose, is, By what principles is your life regulated? to what end is it directed? Are you living as seeing the things that are invisible and eternal? or are you intently pursuing present and worldly objects as your highest good? Is your life, like that of the deceased, a course of strict self-discipline and unlimited devotedness to its Author? or does it centre in selfish gratifications and earthly pleasures? Are you prepared for a change of being which will certainly, and perhaps quickly, come; and beyond which all change, and all hope of change, are excluded for ever?

These inquiries arise to you as a rational and immor-

tal creature; and, excuse me in remarking, if there is any *reluctance* to entertain them, there is proportionate reason to fear they have been too sadly neglected. And can such subjects as they involve be neglected, without affording some proof of an inward reluctance to regard them? And can such reluctance dwell in the breast of a rational being, without implying an alienation of heart from objects by which it ought to be most powerfully attracted?

It is a law of your nature, that whatever of good is possessed, you should still be looking from the present to some future enjoyment. But, how is it, that while, under the force of this principle, you pass eagerly from the attainment of one temporal pleasure to the pursuit of another, your anticipations never spring beyond the limitations of sense and time, and feed on the immutable realities of a spiritual world? Why should hope stop suddenly in her excursion into futurity on the line which separates this world from another, when by passing that line the prize of immortality, the utmost to which she could aspire, would be within her grasp? Could any thing check her course and paralyze her energies at once, and just when they should be most excited, but *fear*? And why should fear have power to array every thing in an unseen world in forms of alarm and terror, if not sustained by the testimony of *conscience*? Surely here are indications of a mind estranged from Him whom it ought most to know; of a soul fallen from God, sunk into itself, and losing itself, in an animal, sensitive, and perishable existence.

Such a state, as it is the offspring of crime, so it is the parent of misery. It is admitted, that it is capable of some gratifications; and were you not enriched with a superior nature, they would be perfect in their kind while they continued. As it is, they are necessarily imperfect. The senses and appetites of the body may find readily the pleasures for which they are adapted in the suitableness of things around them to their nature; but the soul, an exile from its home, wanders about in such a world, solitary and sorrowful, seeking rest and finding none.

In the midst, indeed, of animated spirits, social enjoyments, honourable duties, and soothing reputation, your passions have endeavoured to importune you into a sense of happiness; but the effort has been as unsuccessful as it was clamorous. The soul, offended at the violence offered to its own unwelcome convictions, has refused to confirm the pleadings of the heart; and while the smile of joy has been playing on your cheek, and the breath of flattery exhilarating your spirit, and the cup of prosperity sparkling in your hand, it has ached with a bitter sense of vacancy and vexation!

O do not put from you this confession of a timid and silenced conscience! Do not hide yourself from the inquietudes of your own spirit! They are unwelcome, but they are salutary. To trifle with them is to trifle with your best interests; to conquer them is to achieve your own ruin. Rightly understood, they point you to peace and felicity; they are the flutterings of the winged spirit that would fain soar to its native heaven—the yearnings of the orphaned soul after its Father and its God. *Here*, in all the eye sees, in all the ear hears, in all the hand touches, in all the imagination devises, it finds nothing adapted to itself—nothing worthy of its *final* dependance. Earth is all too narrow, time is all too short, the world is all too gross, for its expanding and spiritual capacities. Its pasture, its alliances, its inheritance are in heaven.

Cease, then, from the world, and all the world contains—from the seductions of pleasure—from the blandishments of wealth—from the glory of fame and power. They are emptier than vanity, fleeter than the wind; the shadow of a shade, the image of a dream; fair to the sight, tempting to the lip; rottenness to the grasp, and bitter as gall in the remembrance. The love of them is in exact opposition to the love of God, to the soul's present joy and future salvation. O arise, then, to the pursuit of a portion adapted to your rational, commensurate with your eternal, existence! Let your earthbound thoughts and affections ascend to objects worthy of them; let them return to God who gave and inspires them—to God, the rest of the weary, the exclusive centre of the soul! *There.*

in his light, the spirit shall see light, in his purity be made pure, in his glory be restored to its original nobility and grandeur. *There*, in the uncreated, infinite, and everduring excellence of Deity, it will find a portion which can never be explored—a fountain of perennial delight, which flows but the more freely for the largest demands made on its living fulness!

In your aspirations to this blessedness (if happily excited), let no sense of your demerit enfeeble or check your desires. The enemy with whom you have to contend, when he can no longer detain you in captivity by the lulling opiates of carnal security, will seek to hold you by the oppressive chains of despondency. But be not ignorant of his devices. Admit, at once, all that he would urge against you; your folly and your sin; your departure from the living God; your idolatrous and perverse attachment to forbidden objects. Fall under the testimony of Scripture, on the error of your ways and the desert of your conduct. Allow that you are miserable, because you have been wicked; and that your wickedness might justly involve you in deepest punishment. But, admit all this, not as an argument *against* turning to the God you have forsaken, admit it as a reason why you should apply to him with greater earnestness of purpose. The more alarming the disease, the more needful the physician; the more formidable your offence, the more important is strenuous intercession for an act of divine forgiveness.

Say not, "There is no hope!" it is the whisper of a proud and unbelieving spirit. There is hope! abundant hope in God! in the compassion of his heart, in the power of his arm, in the promises of his gospel, in the vicarious atonement of his Son, in the effectual influences of his Holy Spirit. Return, then, to God, from whom you have revolted, humbly confessing your sins, trusting in the accepted merits of the Great Mediator, and looking for that assistance which you need, and he has graciously promised. Awake from the lethargy of indifference! arise from the depression of fear! You live under the richest dispensation of mercy. Every thing invites you

to God. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent (those who are sincerely intent on the object) take it by force. The Spirit says, Come; and the church says, Come; and whosoever *will*, let him come and take the waters of life freely. There is hope to all who *come*; none are without hope but those who *wilfully* stay away, and, by staying away, exclude themselves.

Yet again permit me to address you in the words of caution. There is a wide distinction between certain convictions reaching the *understanding*, and obtaining full possession of the *heart*. Yea, there is an essential difference between arriving at the formation of any resolutions, and carrying them out into instant, persevering action. If all who have formed purposes of abandoning sin and seeking in religion forgiveness and felicity, *were* saved, few indeed would be the number of those who would finally suffer for their crimes. But, alas! in most cases, these resolutions have never found expression in the conduct; they have been extorted by terror, or framed to appease an alarmed conscience. In defiance of them, the tenor of the life has remained unchanged; the *present time* has been, day after day, given to vanity; the *future*, *while future*, promised to better things. These better things, which were not distinctly realized, which the heart did not sincerely love, were postponed—and postponed—and postponed—till, the hour of inquest and retribution arriving, it was impossible to delay, or to trifle, or to hope any longer; and those resolutions which the will had never adopted, the heart never cherished, stood among the highest aggravations of guilt unpardoned and unpardonable.

In any ordinary circumstance, you would judge it a mark of pitiable and criminal weakness for an individual needlessly to transfer duties it is important to do at once, to a distant period. And, surely, you will not allow yourself to be deceived into the adoption of this dangerous procrastinating principle in a concern of the utmost moment to you? What infatuation and insincerity it implies! Is it too soon to be wise—too soon to be forgiven—too soon to be happy? If you act on a principle

which has been fatal to myriads, but for a day, an hour, is it not just to conclude it will be fatal to you? This is a dispensation as strict in judgment as it is rich in mercy! The ordination of Heaven is, "that those who see," and act not agreeably to their perceptions, "shall be made blind." "*Now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation." It is all present—it is all passing! The Scriptures have not a promise, the ministry has not a commission, for any future time—no, not for the next day, the next hour! *Now*, *now* is the accepted time—the only time in which you can be assured of favour and forgiveness! O consider this very urgency of the divine grace as the noblest proof of its condescension! consider the frailty of your existence as the most pressing motive to respect it! You will not resolve to give yourself up to religion *to-morrow*, when you may die *to-day!*

May die to-day! O, I beseech you, lay to your heart a deep sense of your mortality! And seriously, frequently inquire, in answer to all the illusions of the world and the plausibilities of conscience, how you can sustain your last conflict without the presence of religion! To the bed of death you must surely and shortly come! At this moment, time is shorter with you, the grave nearer to you than ever. *Then*, when the body is oppressed with languor and tormented with suffering; when the cold sweat stands on your forehead; when the shadows of death spread themselves over your countenance; when the earth trembles, and shakes, and recedes beneath you; when the spirit shudders at the presence of an opening, unknown eternity; when the dying wandering eye asks an assistance from weeping friends which they cannot afford; *then*, what will you do without the supports, the consolations of religion! The pleasures you may have loved, the honours you may have gained, the property you may have amassed, the society you may have cultivated, what will they avail in such an hour? They all belong to a corporeal and temporal state of existence; in leaving the world you must leave them; and, as far as they are concerned, you will find yourself naked and alone at the footstool of your Creator!

As it is appointed for all men once to die, so all must enter into judgment. *You* must stand at the judgment-seat of Christ—*you* must render an account of the deeds done in the body, of the thoughts cherished in the heart. Solemn, supreme, and final scrutiny! Nothing can be concealed, nothing palliated, nothing altered. The trumpet sounds—the Judge is coming—your eye watches for his appearing! The sun is smitten with darkness, the moon turned into blood, the stars fall from their courses—you see them not! The thunders of Omnipotence are rolling and raging from pole to pole, from world to world; the earth is dissolved, the heavens pass away with a mighty noise—you hear it not! Millions of your fellow-creatures are ascending from the ruins of perishing creation, and are pressing thick around you to the general judgment—you heed them not, know them not! Your fixed, your aching spirit is still searching for the first glimpses of the Judge's appearance! He comes! The tribunal is set—the books are opened—*you* are summoned to his bar! O how will you look on the face of a despised, neglected, injured Saviour! of a just, indignant, powerful Judge!

Judgment is followed by eternity. It is this gives it all its terrors. It is this clothes the felicities of heaven with imperishable glory; it is this which gives to punishment a deathless sting. O eternity, eternity! A period without beginning, without pause, without succession, without end! duration without time, being without limit! Your noblest birthright; but, if sinfully abused, your deepest curse! O think of the worm that dieth not—of fire that cannot be quenched! Think of a soul lost—lost for ever! Living only to suffer; invigorated, to be increasingly alive to suffering! Enlarged in its capacities to contain only a fuller cup of wo; immortalized to be immortally wretched! Nothing to love—nothing to pursue—nothing to divert the attention from unmixed, unabated misery. Wretched in itself—wretched in its society—wretched in the thought of heaven's felicity—wretched, above all, in the thought of the blessings wil-

fully cast away, the wrath wilfully plucked down on itself —wrath already realized, and always to come!

And are you an expectant of these things? Is the Judge at the door? Is an immortality of bliss or woe most surely yours? And can you for a moment be careless to the infinite alternative? Can you neglect now what will shortly *engross* you for ever? O, by the certainty of death; by the coming of the day of judgment; by the riches of immortality; by the ruinous punishment of the wicked; by all that is dearest to you; by all that is most dreadful; by all that is present; by all that is to come; I entreat, I beseech you—what shall I say?—in the name of the book by which you are to be judged, I command you, not for an instant, to neglect your great salvation! Awake, arise, call upon God! Pray—watch—wrestle—agonize! All you can do—all you can suffer—all you can sacrifice, is unutterably trifling when salvation is your object, and immortality your prize. The day of mercy is not yet passed—the time of life is not yet spent—the door of hope is not yet shut! Struggle to enter in! It is for your life! and that life eternal! Hell from beneath—heaven from above, are moved for you! Lost demons would decoy you into their own destruction; blessed spirits would minister to your deliverance! More and greater are they that are for you, than all that are against you. The Almighty Saviour is on your side in this conflict! Take hold of his strength—plead his mercy—rely on his promise—look to him—flee to him. He will cast out none—the weakest, the most unworthy—who come unto him. Blessed—supremely, eternally, infinitely blessed—are they who put their trust in him. Nothing can harm them—nothing empoverish them! To them, affliction loses its sting, and eternity its terrors. In the ruins of the universe they lose nothing —suffer nothing! Then life is to begin—their good things to come. Honours that never fade—riches that are never exhausted—pleasures that never cloy—are theirs. Heaven is their inheritance—eternity their time—and God—the great, the good, the blessed—the

light of our light, the joy of our joy, the soul of our existence—is their portion and their glory! This incomprehensible Being—opulent in his own perfections, happy in his own excellence—invites you to himself! His arms of paternal love are expanded to receive! The world by its vanity—time by its flight—the grave by its solemnities, urge you to obey this invitation. Yes, even the grave, on such a subject, has a voice awful as itself to warn and exhort you. The life we have traced, the death we have together lamented, the tomb we have together surrounded, do they not speak most powerfully in the ear of Reason and Conscience? Amid the silence, and the darkness, and the mysteries of mortality, is there not a spirit-voice that says—LIFE, EARTH, TIME, are NOTHING! ETERNITY, HEAVEN, GOD, are EVERY THING!

APPENDIX.

LETTER I.

TO HER PARENTS.

My beloved and honoured Parents;

PERMIT your Martha to indulge the feelings of her heart towards you in writing a few lines. Shall I tell you how often I think of you? No—I cannot do it! Shall I tell you how much I wish you here? Language fails. Shall I describe the impression your kindness from childhood to the present hour has made on my heart? This, too, is impossible! I must be content to say, that your happiness is dearer to me than my own; and that the mind of your Martha is only peaceful and serene as she believes yours to be so.

I have the happiness to inform you, that my health seems gradually returning; and this, my dear parents, does not give me so much pleasure as the thought that you will be gratified to hear it.

A fond mother often says—a parent only can know the feelings of a parent; let me add—a daughter only can know the feelings of a daughter.

I have but two complaints to make; one is, that I am at such a distance from my family; and the other, that I am deprived of the ministry of my beloved pastor. Pray for me, my dearest parents, that I may exemplify all I have heard him inculcate; and may you abundantly realize all those holy delights he so earnestly commends to us!

Yours,
With unvarying love and gratitude,
MARTHA.

LETTER II.

TO MRS. B———.

My dear Friend;

MAY I not, ought I not, to say, "Bless the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!" O for a heart to praise him! How frequently the pleasures as well as the sorrows of life unfit us for this holy exercise! Strange that the streams of comfort should render us unmindful of the fountain!

How much I shall be gratified by seeing you. When we meet, may we evidently be as fast preparing for eternity as we are advancing towards it!

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

My dear Friend;

MY journey was attended with pleasure, pain, and profit.

The pleasure and pain I regarded but little, knowing they would soon terminate; but I was anxious to seize the opportunity afforded me for *improvement*, because I knew it would never return. This is just as I wish to do in the journey of life.

On Sabbath morning, I entered that sacred place where we have often mingled our praises and our prayers. I looked round; you were not there. My dear mother was confined. Many of my friends had the emblems

of mortality about them; upon the countenances of others sat languor and disease. My spirit sunk; and I felt afresh the need of inward consolation. The preacher ascended the pulpit, and chose these words for his text: "Because I live, ye shall live also." I listened while he showed the similarity of the Christian's life to the life of Christ. My spirit was refreshed, and I could not help exclaiming, O that all were acquainted with this source of consolation, wretched as they must be without it!

The preacher proceeded to show that life produced exertion; and that in proportion as this life advanced in the Christian, his exertions would be general, uniform, energetic, and pleasurable. Such I wished my own exertions might be—such I devoutly wished might be yours; for I know not that I could ask for you any thing more desirable. O if such is the spirit of our exertions, what good may we not do! With such a disposition, every day will afford some opportunities of being useful. Let us determine, my dear, in the strength of Jesus, to engage in nothing without aiming at the divine glory.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

My dear Friend;

You are in debt to me I know not how many letters; but I am so much indebted to you in another sense, that I cannot help seizing every opportunity of acknowledging my obligations. You have heard, perhaps, that I have been suffering from a fresh disorder. Pray for me, that it may be sanctified, and that in patience I may possess my soul. If it is impossible to enjoy peace and serenity of mind in the hour of sickness without the supports of religion, how can death be endured in their absence? Or should conscience, by a long course of sin, be stupified

and rendered indifferent to the solemnities of that awful hour, how much will the anguish of the spirit be increased at the moment of its separation from the body! These considerations ought to stir our zeal for the welfare of others, and lead us to seize every prudent opportunity of impressing the minds of all around us with the infinite importance of attending to their eternal concerns.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

My dear Friend;

THOUGH I am very busy, I hope to have an opportunity of sending to you to-morrow. I therefore lay aside my work, in order to assure you that you are not forgotten by me. Does *this* assurance gratify you? O let us call to remembrance the repeated assurances we have, that Jehovah never forgets his people! But are you ready to fear that he does not remember you *in mercy*, because you so often forget him? If this is the case, I can sympathize with you; for when I look within, I am often ready to exclaim, Can God indeed dwell here? Yet, let us not be discouraged. Jesus has said, he will cast out none; and he has promised his Spirit to all who ask it. How often, when oppressed with sin and borne down by affliction, are we led to say—I loathe it, I loathe it! I would not live always! It is difficult, very difficult, to preserve a *waiting posture*, neither anxious for life nor death. When we are summoned to the bar of Jehovah, may our language be, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!" It is at once the language of divine patience and heavenly hope.

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

My dear Friend;

I CANNOT exactly enter into your present feelings; but I imagine them. It is no trifling thing to be in a small degree responsible for an immortal spirit; to be wholly so must then be a most serious charge. While reflections of this nature solemnize your mind, it is needful to watch against *despondency*. Our apprehensions should never sink us below a reliance on Him who has said, "Trust in me at *all* times."

Let us arise and tell Him all our wants; let us ask of Him great things worthy of a God to bestow; and let us ask *in faith;* remembering, that we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus.

When we consider how little we can accomplish by our actual exertions, it is gratifying to recollect that we may benefit the *whole world* by our prayers. May our exertions and our prayers be constantly united!

I hope you will be enabled to improve every talent intrusted to you. Your *influence* is no longer small. It is a talent you can, and will employ. How often has my conscience reproached me for neglecting it! May you learn from my regrets! and if possible, let no one come beneath your roof without deriving some advantage from your example, your counsel, your sympathy, or your prayers. Be not deceived, as I have frequently been, by thinking you have not prudence or skill sufficient for the occasion. We are not called to any duty for which divine wisdom cannot qualify us; and much of our fancied humility may be traced to our indifference.

LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

Soon, my dear Ann, you will become a parent. Then you will be able more fully to appreciate that pathetic declaration, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." When you know a mother's feelings, it will *appear* impossible for you, for a moment, to forget your dear infant. Remember, then, my love, for your consolation, it is *really* impossible that your Almighty parent should fail in his kindness towards you. I hope your soul is in perfect peace, being stayed on God. How soon will events that now engage us so completely, cease to interest! Shortly, very shortly, the only great concern will be, whether we are ready for the appearing of the Lord, and what we have done for his glory. May we live *now* as we shall desire to have lived *then!*

F—— often occupies my thoughts! I ardently wish its prosperity. Let every thought of your minister, my dear, be turned into prayer. Ah! we little know all they have to combat with. If we are dead or lifeless, the effect is trifling; but if they are so, all feel it—all discover it; and if this discovery invariably urged us to wrestle with God on behalf of his servants, what a change might we frequently witness in our families and our churches. Send me word on what evening the poor people assemble for their lecture. I like to meet them *in spirit.*

LETTER VIII.

TO MISS H———.

My dearest L——;

To-day my prospect has been bounded by the opposite houses; my walk has been the length of the room in which I sit; and yet, perhaps, I have enjoyed the works of nature, in imaginary rambles, as much as those who have actually taken them. How great are the pleasures of imagination! How kind is our Creator in allowing us so many sources of delight! Exquisite, indeed, was my pleasure while strolling down the shady lanes of Frampton, listening to the music of the birds, or the gentle rippling of the water, surveying the yellow grain and the busy labourers gathering it in their bosoms.

It has been justly observed, that solitude and silence, properly enjoyed, exalt the mind above its natural tone, fire the imagination, and prepare it for the most sublime and exalted conceptions. Retirement gives birth to new and undefined emotions; but when every thing else is favourable to his happiness, without the smiles of his Heavenly Father the Christian's enjoyments are scarcely worth the name. It is the combination of spiritual and intellectual delights that can transport and satisfy his longing spirit! Let us endeavour, my dear friend, to connect every thing with God.

If we are contented to pass through the present state as pilgrims, we shall meet with much to refresh and gratify us; but if we attempt to rest in the wilderness, we shall soon feel a thorn in our pillow. You did not say whether you went to the Sunday-school, or whether you were able to drop a few tracts in your journey. If beautiful scenery elevates and expands the heart, may our increasing sensibility discover itself in our fervent love to Jesus, and in our simple-hearted efforts to promote the interests of our fellow-creatures!

LETTER IX.

TO HER BROTHER.

And does my dearest brother love me? Cheering assurance! There is nothing of which I am more confident, yet nothing I more delight to be told. O, it is pleasing to dwell on the love of a brother! What, then, should we feel in dwelling on the love of a Saviour!

I am now seated in *your* study, and you can hardly tell the pleasure this simple circumstance occasions. Since you did not tell me what book I should read next, I have ventured to begin Allison on Taste. I love knowledge for its own sake; but I wish also to acquire information, that I may be worthy to be called your sister.

The sun shines delightfully this morning; I hope you and dear E. are able to enjoy its beams. When you said she was poorly, I was wishing to be with her, to pay her any little attentions she might require. Were I to indulge my feelings, how I should amplify in my wishes for you; but I forbear, well knowing the expression of our attachment must be restrained and regulated in order to be valuable. When clothed in *action*, however, it never ceases to be agreeable; and in this way will I ever seek to discover the affection of my spirit.

I heard Mr. K—— this evening with much pleasure. Every sentence he uttered was weighty. Good man! his race is almost run, and very soon he will be gathered to his fathers. The young minister, who is all zeal in the service of his master, and the aged veteran, who has borne the heat and burden of the day, excite peculiar emotions; for one we pray much, for the other our souls are melted into gratitude. There were some excellent petitions offered up for you, in which I most heartily united. How could we live at a distance from

those who were dear to us as life itself, if we are not permitted to indulge our affection for them at the throne of Mercy?

Pray, my dearest brother, that my life may be a *useful one.* I would fain be like a gentle stream, that glides quietly through the vale, refreshing and fertilizing wherever it goes?

LETTER X.

TO MRS. B——.

A HAPPY, a prosperous year to you, my beloved friend, in every sense, but especially in a spiritual one! How long it is since I heard from you! The occupations of life press on us, and steal away our time; so that, at the close of each successive week, we are ready to exclaim, Can it be Saturday? How perpetually, too, are we constrained to lament, that the things of time and earth have engrossed too large a portion of our attention! If we are conscious of misimproving the past, let us seek to be doubly diligent in future. A *new* year is commenced: what *new* plans of doing good can we form? What is most likely to increase our zeal in the pursuit of those which exist already? Are there not some individuals over whom we possess a degree of influence, which has not been *sufficiently* exerted? Are there not many for whom we have not done all we *might* do? O how little do Christians *go out of their way* for the good of souls! How little do they evince the Spirit of Him who *came* to seek and to save that which was lost! Blessed Jesus, make us, and make all thy people, increasingly like thyself!

LETTER XI.

TO HER BROTHER.

It is Wednesday night, my beloved brother; consequently I am a little out of spirits, because I cannot fly to the chapel. I hope, however, to cheer myself by a few moments converse with you.

First, permit me to return my sincere thanks for your very kind loan of Stewart, especially as you may have sacrificed some pleasure in foregoing his delightful society. But while to offer thanks may be most gratifying to myself, I am aware that, to a heart like yours, it will be a higher gratification to know that the perusal has afforded me no small pleasure. Among other benefits I hope to derive from it, is a more profound veneration for the Author of my intellectual faculties. I wish to cultivate my rational powers, that I may form more enlarged views of the Divine Being, and that I may have another talent to dedicate to his service. O, my dear brother, what an exalted motive does religion supply to every pursuit!

LETTER XII.

TO MISS N———.

Now, then, my dear Maria, for a little chat. I suppose you are often affectionately saying, "I should like to know how Martha is going on." Well, my dear, I will endeavour to tell you; and for once will write "a great deal about myself." I attend to my physician's advice,

and walk twice a day. This morning I crept slowly down a lane, which commands on one side a very fine prospect. Every now and then my book was shut, and I gazed around me like one enamoured. Then I looked within, and said—

> The stillness of this hour expels
> All tumult from my breast.

Yes, my dear, I felt invigorated by the pure air, and tranquillized by the delightful scenery. Then I leaned on a bridge, contemplating the present, the past, and the future. I thought of the Hand that had led me all my life long, and hoped I should never be unwilling to submit to its guidance, whether the path it shall select for me be rough or smooth. I then sauntered home, but not without feeling grateful to my dear parents for all their kindness.

So much for the passing day: now for something more substantial. To-morrow is the Sabbath. O, my dear, how fast is time rolling away! It is a common observation, but how little does it *affect* us! Let it not only solemnize our minds, but comfort them. The faster time flows, the sooner we hope to be released from sin, and admitted to the presence of our Lord. Is the time short? then let us do what we do with all diligence; not waiting, as I am apt to do, for great occasions of usefulness, but seizing with avidity all the lesser ones that offer; remembering that, as by repeated touches of the pencil, the artist completes the piece which remains to be admired for ages, so by a multiplicity of exertions, in themselves apparently trivial, we may hope finally to promote, in no small degree, the good of our fellow-sinners and the glory of our Lord.

You say, my dear, I tell you but little about my Sabbaths Shall I explain the reason. I do not like the language of complaint, and therefore I am silent. Indeed I have cause to be very jealous of myself, lest I should sink into carelessness and indifference of spirit. I well remember ——'s saying, "One of the causes of declension in religion is, our attendance on a ministry by

which we are not benefited." But let me not forget to remind you of the kindness of God. He has said, "the soul of the righteous shall not famish;" and I have never gone looking to him but I have received a portion.

LETTER XIII.

TO HER YOUNGER BROTHER.

My dearest Brother;

You are kind enough to solicit a frequent correspondence; and I comply with this request the more cheerfully, because it affords me an opportunity of expressing those sisterly feelings, which, at the present eventful period of your life, cannot fail to pervade my heart.

I feel that you are about to enter on the stage of life for yourself. I feel that your character is about to be stamped; and I am anxious, anxious with all the tenderness of a sister, for that character to be stamped by respectability and eminent piety. We have a brother,

* * * * * * * *

Let us not disgrace him by neglecting to improve any opportunity either for our intellectual or spiritual advantage. We have parents who watch our conduct with inexpressible solicitude. O that their last days may be cheered and comforted, by seeing their children steadily pursuing their footsteps!

I am well aware that your heart joins with mine in fervently wishing that you may be the ornament and honour of your family; but how is this desirable end to be brought about? By uniting *fervent prayer* with *diligent exertion*. I need not inform you, my dear brother, that we cannot arrive at excellence of any description by sudden starts: it is only by patient, assiduous, and constant efforts. We shall doubtless meet with many obstacles in the path of duty, and many temptations to

draw us aside; still, however, let us remember, as a constant incentive to our endeavours, *that the eye of God is on us.*

When depressed by innumerable difficulties, arising from ill health and want of time, I have been encouraged to persevere afresh, by reflecting that my efforts for self-cultivation were not for *time* but for *eternity*. O, my brother, never let us be contented with merely passing through life *without doing any harm*; but let us rather be ambitious of resisting all evil—of doing much good! Thus shall we manifest, that we are no common enemies of sin and Satan, nor common friends to the present and eternal interests of our fellow-creatures.

I enclose "Taylor on Self-cultivation." I trust you pray for me, that I may be a blessing in this place. Great, indeed, are my privations; but I am comforted by the hope, that perhaps God will render me the instrument of promoting his glory. Write as soon and as much as you can.

Your ever affectionate

MARTHA.

LETTER XIV.

TO MRS. B———.

I THINK, my dear friends, of your kindness by day and dream of it by night. May the Father of Mercies recompense all your affection. Poor Mrs. M—— is fast declining. O how much we suffer from the transitory nature of terrestrial good. At five-and-twenty we look around for the friends who cheered us at sixteen; but—where are they? Where are they? *Not lost*, my Ann; they are only gone before us to their heavenly home. O to view every thing in the light of faith, and not in those gloomy shades which unbelief throws over the actions of the Divine Providence!

LETTER XV.

TO THE SAME.

Now, my dear Ann, you must imagine me in a snug cottage, far away from the bustle of the town, and removed even from the little noise of the village street. In fact, the quietude which reigns here would often lead me to suppose myself really at F——, did I not look in vain for the countenances which greeted me in that peaceful spot.

Here my companions are a good-natured widow, and my faithful attendant Maria. Their kindness is a remembrance of yours. I visit but little; and the principal guests I entertain are some fine rosy children. They often beguile my solitary moments; and when I can indulge a hope of doing good to them, I can think of home without a sigh. O the word home! how many ideas does it recall to mind! how many tender regrets does it occasion! and, in defiance of all our efforts to look on the bright side, how many sighs escape us! Well, we will think of our eternal home; we will meditate on its ecstatic pleasures—on their nature and durability, till our spirits learn even to rejoice in tribulation, since we are assured that our light afflictions prepare us for a weight of glory.

O, my dear friends, what heights of piety have been attained by some of those who are now in the presence of their Lord, even in circumstances less favourable to religion than ours!—and what forbids our reaching the same eminence? Let us pray more fervently for each other.

LETTER XVI.

TO MISS N———.

My dearest M——,

I WAS concerned to hear you had not received the attentions from * * * * which you expected. Let me remind you, my dear, of what you already know, that every individual has his own standard of kindness, and by that he is regulated. We must not permit ourselves on every occasion to think how *we* should have acted; but remember, that what would be real unkindness in us is not so possibly in the case of another person, who views the subject in a different light. After all, however, we are often unable to repress a sigh at the little attention paid by the generality of persons to the finer feelings of the heart. The truth is, we are by nature *selfish*; and it is only in proportion as religion prevails in the soul, that it becomes benevolent, and concerned to promote the happiness of every human being in every possible way.

It is our felicity to know, that a capacity for doing good is by no means confined to the learned; so far from it, they are often tempted to devote that time to literary pursuits which ought to be employed in the active duties of benevolence. Moderate talents, like small coin, may be brought into use every hour; while those talents we so often wish to enjoy, can perhaps be seldom turned to advantage, except for the gratification of the possessor. Indeed, I have often asked myself with severity, Why do I so much lament not having enjoyed the advantages which others possess? Is it because I could have done more good than is now in my power? Foolish reasoning! does not my Creator know best what means are necessary to fit me for the station he designs? Let me, then, in this, as well as in every thing else, acquiesce in his will, while I diligently strive to improve the op-

portunities he has bestowed. By the vigilant improvement of one talent, it may be increased sevenfold. Part of our discipline here, my love, is to learn contentment; and, to render this more easy in an intellectual sense, let us remember the period is fast arriving when we shall be perfect in knowledge.

I know of no species of knowledge which may not in some way, or at some time, be consecrated to the service of the Most High. It is an insult to the Almighty, while we profess to devote our talents to his honour, to let them lie aside and rust. Unworthy, indeed, is the most highly cultivated intellect of his acceptance; yet we know He will graciously accept the surrender of the meanest. Let us labour to render our intellectual faculties as little unworthy of an offering to him as possible.

LETTER XVII.

TO MRS. B———.

After your very long silence, my dear Ann, your letter was exceedingly welcome; but really I must not be put off as I have been. I shall most certainly call on Mr. B. to interpose his authority, unless I perceive an immediate reformation. Seriously, though, my dear friend, I am too much interested in your welfare not to be anxious for you to be a good correspondent.

Happy am I to hear such a good account of you and the family. What is the infant's name? I hope dear William's mamma will be no way concerned, that he does not yet begin to display his eloquence; she must remember that many have been long before they began to speak; but then, in after life they have often abundantly compensated for their delay by speaking much to the purpose. How I should like to have been present

at the baptism. May all the petitions offered be abundantly fulfilled.

I have done myself the pleasure of working you a flounce. May you feel half the pleasure in wearing it which I have realized from your last token of affection. Indeed I often think of the kindness I received from you and dear Mr. B.; and when depressed by long absence from almost all who are dear to me, I transport myself to F——, once more take my seat at your hospitable board, and listen to the supplications at the family altar. May the fire of devotion ever burn bright and clear on that altar, and the sacrifice of praise ascend to your Heavenly Father, like incense perfumed in the merits of the dear Redeemer. Ah, my dear Ann, we sometimes think wealth important, health important, ease important; but, after all, what is there of any importance, compared to walking closely with God? Let us, then, aim, my dear, so to enjoy our comforts as to be led nearer to God by them, and let us cheerfully resign them when called upon, knowing that in all our sorrows, privations, and conflicts, Jehovah designs the good of our spirits. I have lately suffered so much from pain, that I am the more gratified to hear of your health. I hope that invaluable blessing will be long continued to you. Since I last wrote, I have been much better; but within this fortnight unpleasant symptoms have returned, and I fear—

After this statement, I need not tell you that I suffer both by night and day; but O, my dear friend, it is in the hour of suffering that we experience most of the tender compassion of our Saviour. Pray that I may glorify him under all circumstances.—

> "How short are all our trials here,
> How light is every cross."

Give each of the dear little ones a kiss for us. May the blessing of the Almighty rest on them and on their parents!

Your truly affectionate

MARTHA.

LETTER XVIII.

TO MISS H———.

* * * * * * *

I NEED not inform you, my dear, that some of the adverse scenes of life are literally *trials*. They try the character. They reveal that character both to ourselves and others. Sometimes they call for the utmost strength of mind, the greatest self-denial, and the constant exercise of prudence. If the individual possess none of these qualities, or possess them only in a small degree, the mind becomes enervated, and perhaps never recovers its proper tone. On the contrary, if these qualities are brought into action, they are strengthened, and the whole character becomes far more exalted.

* * * You complain, my dear, of want of time. Now, I do not exactly know how you distribute it; but I certainly agree with you, that it is very desirable to appropriate some part of every day to the cultivation of your mind. In attempting this, you must not be discouraged. Remember, my dear, it is not *crowding* the mind that makes us wise; hence, many who have comparatively little leisure have more real knowledge than others who have all their time at their disposal. In one instance, knowledge has time to take root; in the other, one plant is continually preventing the growth of another. It is frequently found, that where there has been most blossom there has been the least fruitfulness. Let us always endeavour to discriminate between a well cultivated mind and an overburdened memory. * * *

O when shall I be able to be actively employed in the service of God! I am resigned and thankful for my present comparative ease, because I hope it will fit me for doing some good at a future period. If, however, I am not favoured with the ability, pray, my dear, that I may never want the inclination. * * *

LETTER XIX.

TO MRS. B———.

HAPPINESS attend you, my dear friend! It really appears a long time since I held communion with you through this medium; so I believe I must even indulge myself with scribbling a letter, especially as I hope it will be the means of obtaining a benefit. Yes, my dear friends, I have a favour to ask of you. I want your special prayers. After Christmas I am going to take a few little girls for the purpose of undertaking their education. I feel it is something to engage to impart knowledge, even of the lowest description; but what is that, compared to cultivating the understanding and the heart, with a view to the eternal welfare of the immortal spirit! Pray for me, my dear friends, that in this and every other pursuit I may glorify our God and Saviour. * * *

LETTER XX.

TO HER BROTHER.

IT is enough, my dearest brother—I will try to wait patiently, and say, with you, The will of the Lord be done. These few words, "It is the Lord!" seem to me omnipotent. They hush the loudest storm. I suppose, before you receive this, dear E. will have left Cannon-street. I shall long for the time when you will meet at S——; and hope the pain of separation will be amply compensated by the pleasure you will enjoy at your retreat. As for me, I must be comforted by the idea of your happi-

ness. O the rest of Heaven! who can tell what it will be after the common toils of life, but especially after pastoral anxieties and sorrows! Ah, my brother, how often I think what he must be called to endure. * * *

LETTER XXI.

TO THE SAME.

Ah, it was all in vain! The hearth was touched and retouched in vain; the fire was made to blaze in vain; in vain the dinner was prepared, and the homely dessert was spread! He came not to cheer our spirits and strengthen our faith. Well, the weather is bad, and perhaps he might have taken cold; so I will even bear my disappointment as heroically as I can.

I believe, however, I must begin by confessing, that notwithstanding all my efforts, my spirits are lower than usual. I hoped, and hoped; but here is the very day come that I thought would open to me a scene of usefulness, and provide me with the means of comfort; but my hopes are disappointed. Pray for me!

Well, we will change the subject. Do you wish to take a peep at us just as we are at this moment? Here is Miss C—— at the desk, F—— sitting by the drawers, working away briskly. Charley is on my bed, playing with a few toys, and calling out every minute, Look, look, look, at which I have enough to do to express my feigned astonishment. Andrew is at the table building a house, and taking a geometrical lesson; by-the-by, I should tell you how learned we are. No, no, I will not boast. I must not tell you how carefully we cultivate the heart and the understanding; nor what pains we take to draw forth the affections, regulate the temper, fix the attention quicken the perceptions, strengthen the memory, &c.—But here is Mrs. D. with some plums for the little ones.

What heart that feels and knows any thing of love but is refreshed and soothed by the simplicity of childhood! O to be as a little child! My dear baby, I am so glad to hear she is pretty well; and yet I seem to grudge her growth, when I cannot mark her daily progress; but I am consoled for this loss by knowing that she comforts you. Her brothers talk of her; and many a fair dream, my dearest brother and sister, no doubt we mutually indulge, as we look forward and see these little creatures spring into life. May Almighty God bless them, and make them blessings, is all the full heart can utter. And surely God will bless them; yes, he will.

LETTER XXII.

TO MRS. B———.

My beloved Ann;

You will be surprised to hear that I have relinquished my intention of receiving pupils; not, indeed, from choice, but from necessity. It is no small disappointment, at the moment I was hoping to live to some useful purpose, to be thrown back into a state of unusual infirmity and partial helplessness. My days and my nights are wearisome; but we know affliction springeth not from the dust. Pray for me, that the language of my heart may ever be, "The will of the Lord be done!"

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LETTER XXIII.

TO MISS H———.

THE pain I am enduring would, my dearest L——, form a ready excuse for my silence, if I felt less affection for you than I do; but as it is, while I can guide the pen, it must be employed in your service. Indeed, my weakness makes me more anxious to write; for I long for you, my love, to be benefited by my afflictions.

God Almighty bless you, my dear, and help you to view all compromises with the world in the light that sickness, death, and judgment throw upon them! Let us beware of approaching to the *verge* of what we may suppose to be innocent. Let us remember, that whatever destroys our sobriety of mind and renders us unfit for communion with God, is dangerous, highly dangerous.

Pardon me this strain, but I am jealous of you. * * *

LETTER XXIV.

TO HER YOUNGER BROTHER.

My dearest Brother;

I AM not able to write to you, but I avail myself of a hand which is ever at my service. Much it relieved the anxiety I felt on your account, to see you and hear from your own lips that you were comfortable. I think of you while lying on the bed or reclining on the chair. I think of you, and the ardent wish of my heart is, that you may be useful; useful by your exertions, your example, and your prayers. I, alas! can do no good. I am laid aside

early in life; but you, my brother, have still the prize of health, with all its advantages in your hand. May Jehovah hear me while I pray, that you may make the most diligent use of them, and that my affliction may stir you up to renewed devotedness. I know well how to sympathize in the changes you have experienced: but be of good cheer; for though the ways of Providence are mysterious, they are ways of love; and ere a few years have rolled away, you will give thanks for those trials which seem the most severe.

I have had the advice of an eminent surgeon: sometimes I think he may be of service to me; but I am more inclined to fear, that neither medicine nor regimen can be of much use. Pray for me, my dear P——, that I may patiently suffer the will of God. Give thanks for me, also, that in this hour of suffering I have so much to alleviate its pangs. How I long to be of service to you; but I cannot. Well, my brother, you must take the will for the deed; and when Providence has prepared your mind, I hope you will be indulged with a competent portion of the good things of this life. Evening draws on, and admonishes me to close. Adieu, my dearest P——; may all the wishes of a sister's heart alight on you!

Your ever affectionate

MARTHA.

LETTER XXV.

TO MRS. B——.

My dear Friend;

THAT part of your letter relative to the Sunday school gave me real pleasure. I assure you, before twelve months are elapsed I expect to have the gratification of hearing that you rival us. Expect much, my dear, and

then you are likely to pray for much; and where much is asked, much will be given. After all, the best plans will go but a very little way towards the prosperity of a school. Its teachers must be persons of prayer, persons whose minds are deeply impressed with their infinite obligations to redeeming love, and who are anxiously concerned to bring the dear children to Jesus. Let this, my dear, be our constant aim, and then, though we should see no fruit year after year, we need not be discouraged, knowing who hath said, "In due time ye shall reap if ye faint not." Those who sow in the youthful mind must in general wait long ere the seed spring up; but oh, when the time of reaping comes, who does not exclaim, "This is worth all our exertions, all our prayers, and all our tears!" Similar to this were my feelings lately, when I saw one of our scholars go forward to the sacred board.

With this I send the rules we adopt. The accompanying papers are pasted on boards, and hung up at the head of each class. By this means all the children are taught at once, and considerable time is saved for their spiritual instruction.

Winter is making rapid advances. How admirably the changing seasons are adapted to impress our spirits with a sense of our own mortality; and surely if we are properly affected with this consideration, it will lead us to self-examination.

It is long since we met. A winter and a summer have passed away.

During this period what advances have we made in faith, in holiness, in love, in humility, in penitence, in spirituality, in gratitude, in meekness? For myself, I have deeply to lament, that, notwithstanding the rich culture I enjoy, I am continually compelled to exclaim, "My leanness, my leanness!" Yet I hope I have learned to exercise more dependance on the Saviour. As we see more of ourselves, my dear friend, Jesus will be more precious in our eyes. Let us rejoice that God has promised to complete his work; and that we have not been permitted to return to the world. If we have any desires for communion with him, any faith in the Re-

deemer, any dependance on the Holy Spirit, let us praise him for his past goodness, and supplicate still larger blessings.

Remember me very kindly to Mr. B——, and tell him, if you can, how anxious I am for his prosperity.

May the Lord bless you temporally and spiritually, and finally administer to you individually an abundant entrance to his everlasting kingdom.

Yours, affectionately,

MARTHA.

LETTER XXVI.

TO MR. B ———.

Dear Sir;

I AM obliged to you for your very kind remembrance of me. It is indeed no small privilege to have a share in the good wishes and fervent prayers of the excellent of the earth.

I was much concerned to hear of your repeated afflictions. May those consolations you so benevolently wish for others be ever realized by yourself and your dear family in the hour of perplexity and sorrow. I long to hear how the concern fares in which you have recently engaged. Permit me to wish, that the blessing of the Almighty may rest on all the labours of your hands.

I feel much my absence from that dear spot in which you are so deeply interested. May I solicit you to supplicate not only that I may be blessed here, but made a blessing! O how fast is life passing away, and as yet how little have I done or suffered for the Redeemer!

I hope ere this you are able to renew your work of love among the dear children. I believe many of them are more attentive to your exhortations than you allow yourself to imagine. May the seed which has been sown with so much care take deep root, and finally spring up

to yield an abundant harvest; and in that great day when hidden things shall be made manifest, may it appear that your sacrifices, your anxieties, and your prayers were by no means in vain. In that day, how many will bitterly regret that they made no more sacrifices for the good of souls! but, who will regret that they made too many? O to act, to think, and to speak as having that day ever in view! Then, when we meet the Redeemer, may we be felicitated by hearing him say, "I was ignorant, and ye instructed me; sick, and ye visited me."

Remember me affectionately to Mrs. B. May the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, rest on you!

Yours respectfully,

MARTHA REED

LETTER XXVII.

TO MISS H——R.

WITH what cheerfulness, my dear Miss H., should I take up my pen, might I hope to be of any service to you. But what arguments can I use that have not been used? What promise can I point out to you with which you are not already acquainted? I can sympathize with you, I can pray for you; but alas! what can I do more? Yet I must write a few lines, merely to show you, that though it is not in my power, yet it is in my will to comfort you. One cause of your present distress I doubt not is your viewing the character of the Deity in a wrong light, or looking at some of his perfections to the exclusion of others. Surely you have forgotten that the Divine Being is love. Ah, do not, I beseech you, think of him merely as an inexorable judge; but think of him as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Be thankful, my dear, that you feel your need of the Saviour; and wait patiently

till he reveals to you your personal interest in the covenant of his grace. Many eminent saints have been suffered to walk in darkness for years; but what sinner did we ever hear of who wished to be made holy and accepted through the Redeemer, that was finally rejected?

As it relates to your departed relative, let me beg you to endeavour to dismiss the subject. When once an individual has quitted our world, it is not for us to decide on his state. I hope and believe, that God will render the preaching of his word effectual to your comfort and consolation.

I well recollect being in a similar state of mind to yours. Fearfulness came upon me, and horror overwhelmed me. I chose death rather than life. But God watched over me, and caused this darkness gradually to subside. Let his goodness to me encourage you. Do not be dismayed if you cannot ascertain one evidence of Christian character. Come to Jesus as a sinner. If he seem to disregard you, tell him (for he kindly permits us to do this) he has promised to cast out none. Wait on him, and whatever you doubt, *doubt* not his willingness to save. Time forbids my adding more. May he bless you with peace, and make your latter end to increase greatly.

Yours affectionately,

MARTHA REED.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO MISS B———.

PERMIT me, my dearest Eliza, to express the sympathy I feel for you under your present trial. Thanks be to God, you are no stranger to the source of true consolation. Let me, however, remind you of the sympathy of Jesus—a sympathy inconceivable and inexhaustible. Remember, my dear, the character he sustains. He bears

the name of friend, of father, of elder brother. And ah, how well does he fulfil the tender relationships they imply. It is beyond the power of man, it is beyond the power of angels, to describe his faithfulness as a friend, his care as a father, his tenderness as a brother. O that you may be enabled, under this and every trial, to contemplate the Saviour as yours in all his characters. I know not that I can wish you a greater blessing. But is it necessary for *me* to remind you of the sympathies of Jesus? O no, it is already done by every thing around you. Yes, we *see*, we *feel*, his tenderness in the trifling occurrences of each passing day; in the looks, the words, the actions of our associates. We see it in their smiles, we feel it in their progress. What shall we render to that God who has brought to light those joys which endure for ever, and opened a new and living way to his heavenly habitation! There the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick, and the days of his mourning shall be ended.

I am not much better; the winter is unfavourable to me. I wish, however, to commit myself patiently to God, and wait his will. Be assured your joys and sorrows are ever mine.

Your affectionate
MARTHA.

LETTER XXIX.

TO THE SAME.

THE evening is lovely, the sky looks beautiful and serene; how much I should like a gentle ramble with you, my dear friend, over some of the delightful hills by which you are surrounded. Well, it is of little consequence if we do but meet together in the heavenly world.

It is nearly seven years since our friendship commenced. Have we assisted each other as much as we possibly could in the way of holiness? Have the trials we have mutually suffered increased our patience, our meekness, and Christian charity? Have our mercies filled us with gratitude, and led us to a simple reliance on the providence of God? Alas! I feel compelled to exclaim with the poet,

"O how exceeding short I fall
Of what I ought to be!"

I have left my dearest brother's, and it has cost me more than I ever thought it would; but I can and do rejoice in his happiness, though I have no longer the felicity of watching his looks and obeying the language of his eye. O that I may learn wisdom from the pain I have so deeply felt, in being repeatedly separated from those in whom my life seemed to be bound up. Ah, there is a melancholy pleasure in retracing those paths which I have trod with anguish, and in fancying I once more behold those spots which have witnessed my sorrows. Alas, for me, that I feel so indifferent to Him who is my redeemer, my life, my all! Pray that I may love him with all my soul, and mind, and strength; that I may so love him as not to be able to enter into society without endeavouring to kindle around me this holy flame, nor to give rest to my spirit, while there remains a human being over whom I have *any* influence, who is unacquainted with his matchless glories! Do not let us exclaim, as the language of *despair*, What can *we* do? but let us utter this exclamation *in faith*, and God will find us employment. Adieu, my dear; send me particulars of yourself, and a piece of spar for my chimney-piece, that I may look at it, and say, It came from my friend.

Your affectionate
MARTHA.

LETTER XXX.

TO THE SAME.

Much as I am pressed for time, I cannot but write a few lines to you, my dear friend, in hope they will reach you before your departure. I rejoice that you can ask for the fulfilment of that gracious promise, "I will never leave nor forsake thee." O that you may at all times feel your interest in it, and then you will be able to go any where, or become any thing, with cheerfulness and gratitude. Rest assured you are always the subject of my sympathy and my prayers. Supplicate for me that I may live to the glory of God. I feel that I am nothing; but this should not discourage me, for Jehovah can make the meanest vessel a vessel of honour.

Farewell, my dear. May the angel of the covenant guide you, and send you prosperity!

Your affectionate

Martha.

LETTER XXXI.

TO THE SAME.

I feel much indebted to you, my dear friend, for your kind inquiries and affectionate solicitude for my beloved father. Last Thursday he was able to sit up for a few hours, and since then he has made considerable progress. What renders his recovery the more remarkable is, that only a few days ago we received information from * * * * quite sufficient to retard his amendment. Thus mercifully is the Lord dealing with us! Let us wait upon him, and be of good courage. He who is so

ready to communicate spiritual blessings, will not withhold from us any good thing.

I can say but little of my own health. Last Wednesday I was seized with a violent pain in the optic nerves, which affected my sight; and soon after, the whole of that side was attacked with a dead stupid feeling. After this statement, I need scarcely tell you I am in constant danger of a stroke; but, my dear, I am in the hands of God, and that is enough, quite enough! Excuse this short letter from

Your affectionate
MARTHA.

LETTER XXXII.

TO THE SAME.

My dear Friend;

IT gave me great concern to hear of your illness. I hope you are by this time completely restored. You have, indeed, proved, that it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom. Well you have proved, also, that our God is faithfulness and truth. I hope you are enjoying much of the divine presence, or, if you are walking in darkness, that you are still staying yourself on the Lord. My Sabbaths here are my worst days. I sigh, but sigh in vain, for those privileges with which I was once favoured. Pray for me that my present trials may be sanctified so as to cause the seed, long since sown, to spring up, and bring forth much fruit.

May the Almighty bless you, my dear, and cause you to prosper more and more till you are dismissed from this vale of tears, and admitted to the joy of your Lord.

Glorious period! blessed are those sorrows which prepare us for its approach.

Your affectionate
MARTHA.

EXTRACTS

FROM THE

JOURNAL.

October 13, 1813. A gentleman related at the dinner-table the experience of a pious woman who is recently dead. I lamented in myself the want of that humility which shone so conspicuously in her. If I had more humility I should not have such hard thoughts of God.

24. The time appears long since I saw my family. O to be enabled to look forward by faith to the period when we shall enjoy the unceasing smiles of Jehovah, and the society of all our friends.

27. Had no opportunity for private devotion, which affected my spirits through the day, and prevented me from fully enjoying its public services.

—— Slept at Mr. L.'s, and took the opportunity of conversing with the servant. O for greater zeal in the service of God!

28. I am now in the way to W——. The road is finely interspersed with hill and vale. While admiring them, I found it hard to set my affections on things above. My soul is almost lifeless. O for the special influence of the Holy Spirit, that I may enjoy communion with Jehovah.

30. Last night we travelled across P——. From the hill we had a fine view of the sea and surrounding country. There we were benighted, and hardly escaped a precipice, not being able to distinguish the road; but my mind was preserved from alarm, trusting in Him who watcheth over his people at all times. Descending the

hill the horse fell, but we were not injured. These occurrences forcibly reminded me of the Christian's journey through life. May the tender providence of God preserve us from all the dangers of the wilderness.

November 3. I have been in much pain lately. O that I may learn to be more thankful for health and ease!

5. A friend who promised to take me to the Sunday school has neglected to call, and I am disappointed. How important it is to seize every means of doing good. I seem, in reviewing the past, to have lived only to myself. Lord, quicken me, and grant that I may return to my own dear little pupils with renewed devotedness! I trust this separation has made me more solicitous for their spiritual welfare. O that I may have a deeper sense of my own insufficiency; and then, if God permit me to be useful, I shall freely ascribe to him all the glory. Lord, revive my love to thyself, and help me to abound in love to my fellow-creatures.

10. The Sabbath is past. In the evening the text was, "Call upon me in the day of trouble." I need to be often reminded of this delightful obligation. O to be favoured with clear and scriptural views of the Almighty, so that every hard thought may be for ever done away! Who could hope to overcome such powerful enemies as the Christian has to contend with, had not God engaged to bring him safely through? but since he has promised to defend his people, who shall dare to despair? What a comfort, to be assured that God is on our side! Have I, however, any right to this consolation? I am often at a loss to discover any resemblance to the Saviour. If I do resemble him, the likeness is faint indeed; and yet I would still be aiming at the mark, and pressing forward for the prize.

12. Since I have been from home, I think I have learned to set a higher value on the means of grace. May I never forget, that, where much is given, much will be required. Truly I have been fed with the finest of the wheat! I expect to reach home in a few days. From this period may I patiently suffer, and cheerfully obey the will of God! O my Father, fulfil my *spiritual*

desires; as to my temporal concerns, I would have no will but thine.

What an unfeeling heart I possess; my ingratitude overwhelms me. Lord, undertake for me!

17. What a changing scene is this! Parting from some friends and saluting others.' Be anxious, then, my soul, more than ever, to prepare for that world where there is no change!

18. What a variety there is in nature—we had some delightful prospects to-day! If our world is so beautiful, what must heaven be? Why, then, have I so little inclination to dwell upon its glories!

"Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings—
Thy better portion trace."

19. Arrived at home in safety. O for gratitude to our preserving God! How innumerable have been thy mercies while away! How many calamities might have befallen me! O that the kindness of Jehovah may influence my spirit!

20. Went to the funeral of a person to-day, who for some years previous to his death was blind and deranged. May I learn from this to be thankful that I am exempted from such awful calamities!

23. My mind is much relieved. I came home full of anxiety; but God has dissipated my fears, and in the day of temptation he has made a way for my escape. How *seasonable* is divine assistance! Help me, O Lord, to be very thankful for all thy mercies.

24. I am afraid I do not cordially approve the plan of salvation. This compels me to say, "Lord, search my heart, and try me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

25. My mind was much impressed this morning with the shortness of life; consequently I saw more beauty in the figures employed by the sacred writers when they describe its vanity. We may well be compared to a *shadow*, and the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cut down! How consolatory is the thought that Jehovah is the same, and that his years change not.

26. How sadly impatient I am at a trifling indisposition. O that I could properly feel my dependance upon God! Health and all our comforts are at his disposal. This is a pleasurable reflection. Does he behold me cleaving to the earth, and depending on the streams instead of the fountain, he can immediately imbitter them, or cause them to be dried up! Does he behold me bowed down with sorrow, and distracted by disappointments, how soon can he scatter every cloud, and lead me by a way I knew not. Do I believe this?—then let me confide in Jehovah, and fear nothing. O how elevated is the Christian's life, when he lives up to his privileges!

29. My mind has been much harassed of late with spiritual enemies, and anxiety for those who are dear to me. But I hope God has imparted a confidence in himself that will still bear me up. To-morrow is the Sabbath; and on that hallowed day I trust we shall experience the renewal of our spiritual strength.

—— I am very weary to-night. What a mercy to have a bed to lie on, and reason to hope I shall have a good night's rest. Blessed Spirit, deign to prepare my heart for the morrow: favour us with such a view of the Saviour's glories as shall overwhelm us with love and gratitude! May self be subdued at the foot of the cross to rise no more; there may our souls find a settled peace! May temptations lose their power, while we are enabled to praise the Lord, and go forward!

—— It is time to prepare for the solemnities of the morrow; to dismiss worldly thoughts, and contemplate my approaching duties. First, I am to instruct the children; let me seek to have my mind deeply impressed with the value of their souls; let me pray fervently for wisdom to communicate instruction with cheerfulness, affection, and simplicity, remembering that my utmost efforts can avail nothing without the divine blessing. Next, I am to hear the word of God; and since I stand in so much need of instruction, let me endeavour to hear with greater attention and prayerfulness. But this is not all; I am about to attend that ordinance which,

above all others, has a tendency to subdue the powerful corruptions of my nature. Blessed Spirit, condescend to prepare me, by thy special influence, for these important solemnities.

Saturday morning. The Sabbath will shortly be here; how ought I to prepare for it? By fervent prayer, holy meditation, and leaving nothing undone of a worldly nature that would molest me. Is this, then, how I ought to prepare for the day of rest? Alas, how little I meditate! and when I attempt it, what disinclination I sometimes feel! O for repentance when I consider the past, and deep spirituality for the future. Amen.

—— How distressing to hear of the beauties of Jesus with eyes almost closed to them, and a heart, in a great measure, indifferent to his excellences! My fears at present rise high; but I know Jehovah is gracious and full of compassion. May we at all times *practically* believe it.

—— What cause have we as a church for thankfulness! Let me be careful that I am not satisfied with belonging to a prosperous body, without being myself in a flourishing condition.

—— O that I had but a right view of the character of Jehovah! I have been distressed all this day for the want of it.

—— In what a variety of ways may our comfort be destroyed; and when the mind is uncomfortable from outward circumstances, it is frequently unfitted for devotion, and thus spiritual troubles enter. What should we do at such times without the assurance that Jehovah constantly watches over us, and is never at a loss to accomplish our deliverance?

—— When Jehovah does not see fit to fulfil our wishes, how thankful we ought to be for any degree of acquiescence in his will.

—— This morning I enjoyed much in prayer, but alas! I soon found that spiritual pride had crept in. How transporting it is to think of being for ever free from sin! O that I may not fall short of that happiness!

—— Quite in a low mood this morning. I was

thinking that I should always be the subject of sorrow. I took up a book, and in that I read an account of a singular turn of Providence for an individual, in raising her from sorrow to joy. This just suited my imagination, and I fell into a sleep, and dreamed of uninterrupted happiness. How great is my folly in both these instances. Why do I think so much of present things which are all uncertain, and so little of those which endure for ever? Nothing can ease a sorrowful heart like confidence in Jehovah.

—— How necessary does affliction seem to my real welfare. If things appear to be for a short time calm and fair, how ready am I to indulge in visionary schemes; and then I require something to awake me. When shall I learn to live, and think, and speak as a Christian! I do not quite despair of this, because God has promised to complete his work; but I fear, lest I should be still slow to learn.

—— I find in myself too great a desire to justify my conduct when any little fault is pointed out to me. Let me not only aim in future to discover my weak side, but when discovered, to set a double watch on it.

Jan. 1814. When languor of body and mind come together, they increase each other. O for faith to pray for the removal of these dark clouds, and then for patience to wait the Lord's time for an answer!

—— If I could but feel as I wish under afflictions, then—but ah, I do not! O for faith to confide in Jehovah!

—— We have just received a letter which says, that yesterday there was a little alteration for the better in our dear friend. This is a cause for lively gratitude. Whatever Jehovah sends to his people must be for the best, therefore it should quell every tumult of our minds to know "It is the Lord." With him too all things are possible. He can speedily restore health when he has taken it away. But I am afraid our hopes have not much foundation in this instance. O for proper feelings under this trial, and for wisdom so to conduct myself, as to mitigate in some small measure the

acute sufferings of ——. Help me, Lord, to banish from my spirit whatever is trivial, and combine all my sympathies with his ——

—— How hard it is to possess all that sympathy and solicitude for those we love which is desirable, and yet to be careful for nothing. Great have been the anxieties of the past week; but it is gone, and probably the circumstances of the next may almost obliterate them from my recollection.

In the same manner the anxieties of time will soon close, and be succeeded by the unalterable joys or sorrows of eternity! Why, then, am I discouraged with a few difficulties? Why this deep concern for *present* happiness, and comparative insensibility to the future?

—— I feel that trials are hardly worth the name, when we have those with us who bear the heaviest half.

—— How anxious we should be for a sense of the divine forgiveness while in health, that when we are called to suffer and die, we may not have the consolations of religion to seek.

A simple and active dependance on the Saviour is the great object of Christian experience. May my trials be sanctified to this end, and then I shall glory in tribulation.

How delightful it must be to contemplate the perfections of Jehovah, and to have the heart filled with his love! To be for ever exploring the mysteries of Providence and redemption. Let me accustom myself to these employments *now*.

—— If we commenced the journey of life with opposite feelings to those which are commonly excited, how much disappointment should we escape! It is in vain that we anticipate an Eden in the wilderness!

—— I have deeply to lament my want of solemnity in the service of God. There is great danger of resembling the children of Israel, who thought lightly of the manna, because it fell in such abundance.

I was much struck to-day with the life of Hannibal. How affecting it would be to trace the decline and fall

of empires, did we not know that there is one which cannot be shaken, and that it is in subordination to this kingdom that every other is giving way.

—— O for such vigorous, constant, and glowing love to the Redeemer, as shall put our doubts completely to flight!

—— We should not be contented with looking at ourselves; let us attentively examine the condition of others. Who is there I can cheer by my sympathy, uphold by my charity, strengthen by my assistance, or relieve by my prayers? O for the Spirit of Christ to rest upon me! My dear * * * still promises fairly, but I want to see more decision of character. Our servants attend the means of grace, but I want them to feel more interested in their privileges. The dear children committed to my care are not so serious as I wish them to be. Let me aim to bless silently by my prayers, and wherever I can, let me second those prayers by my exertions.

—— When the love of Jesus fills the heart, there is nothing too hard to be endured. May this holy principle pervade my bosom! then I shall not only be ready to make great sacrifices occasionally, but be continually sacrificing my own will and desires.

—— The love of Jesus affects me little; but my mind is continually harassed with the idea of eternal punishment. O that God would prevent me from indulging hard thoughts of himself.

—— How thankful we ought to be, that the present state supplies such a mixture of pain and pleasure. Were it always painful, life would soon be useless and insupportable; were it always pleasant, we should consider death rather as an enemy than a friend. It is *every thing* to feel that the sorrows and uncertainties of the present state are overruled to fix our affections on the delightful realities of the next.

—— May I never sink below an humble reliance on the Saviour, nor be ever tempted to rise above it!

Oct. 1817. As I was walking along the road indulging in revery, I was suddenly affected by the distress of a paralytic. A brutal man was amusing himself

with her awkwardness. Poor thing, her sufferings roused me to a sense of my own mercies.

30. The illness of my friend confines me to the house. O it is a luxury to be permitted in any way to contribute to the comfort of others.

Nov. Nature has lost her verdure, but the husbandman does not sit down in despair. On the contrary, he redoubles his exertions. Surely his example deserves my imitation.

3. The morning of this day was very wet and gloomy. I had no idea of its turning out fine. About two, however, the clouds were dispersed, the sun shone out in all his glory, and it was a most delightful evening. From this let me learn not to despair. However dark and gloomy the morning of life, yet the evening may be serene, peaceful, and happy.

4. This morning I awoke praying against selfishness. O that this may not only be my sleeping, but my waking prayer! I walked out in the morning, but had occasion to regret that it was not a walk of usefulness. How desirable it is to pass each day worthy of an immortal being.

5. Attended the Missionary Prayer Meeting. There was not that deep feeling for the poor heathen which I wished to have witnessed; still, however, there was enough to reprove me.

6. I have been pleased to-day with reading a short tale, entitled "The Governess," not only because it corresponded with my own views of education, but because it supplied me with some valuable hints. The more I see of children, the more I feel the great importance of early cultivation. How necessary is the formation of good habits with the inculcation of right principles, and how desirable it is that parents should concur in this great work.

7. This day has passed as most of my days have recently done, without doing any thing worth relating. It is proper, however, to distinguish between inability and disinclination. It is painful when Providence excludes us from activity, but it is only sinful when we exclude

ourselves. When Providence interposes, it may probably be to prepare us eventually for greater good. Let me not, therefore, give way to discouraging thoughts, but endeavour to improve my afflictions so as to be the better for them; and while I am limited to a narrow sphere of exertion, let me be doubly careful to seize those trifling opportunities of glorifying God, which I may once have overlooked.

8. A lady and gentleman came to tea; they were strangers to me, but from every one we may learn something. In one of these persons, I saw a pattern of deep humility and deadness to the world. The other reminded me, that by nature we are without God.

11. How necessary it is to fulfil the duties of each day as they occur.

12. Walked to Enfield. Saw some dear little ones at school. Could not help thinking of the superior advantages of private education in early life. How surprising it is, that mothers can so easily banish their offspring, rather than enjoy the felicity of teaching them with their own hands.

14. Less time than usual for reading. The older I grow, the more anxiety I feel for mental improvement; but I must beware of impatience even here.

We have just established a working school in connection with our Sabbath day instructions. What *dispositions* of mind should I labour after in this undertaking?

An intense desire to promote the glory of Jehovah.

Tenderest pity for souls.

A deep sense of my infinite obligations to Almighty love, for making me a partaker of the blessings of redemption.

A lively feeling of my entire dependance on the divine blessing.

A fervent spirit of prayer.

Great watchfulness, and an affecting sense of the infinite value of an immortal spirit.

Behold the sea and the dry land; the mountains filled with treasures, and the valleys covered with the richest produce. The stars twinkling in the firmament, and the

moon walking in all her quiet radiance. Behold too the meridian sun, riding in all his glorious majesty, imparting life, and light, and heat to the whole creation; and when thou hast beheld, and admired, and extolled these works of an Almighty hand, remember they are nothing, absolutely nothing, to one immortal spirit!

Turn from the contemplation of nature to Calvary, and while thou beholdest the dying agonies of the Redeemer —while thou hearest his groans—while thou art catching that expiring exclamation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," learn, if thou canst, the value of one soul!

Let me inquire, in the next place, what *encouragements* I have.

God has commanded the use of means.

God has blessed these means.

God has given me a spirit of prayer.

God has promised to answer prayer.

God has repeatedly said, that nothing done from love to him shall lose its reward.

This is a period when our efforts to promote the Redeemer's cause are likely to be attended with peculiar success.

THE END.

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